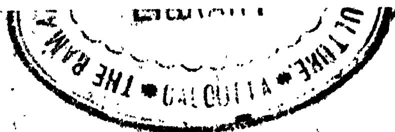
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THE RAM
CALCUTTA

HISTORY OF
THE GURDWARA SHAHIDGANJ,
LAHORE.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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HISTORY OF

THE GURDWARA SHAHIDGANJ, LAHORE,

from its origin to November 1935,

compiled from

ORIGINAL SOURCES, JUDICIAL RECORDS AND CONTEMPORARY MATERIALS

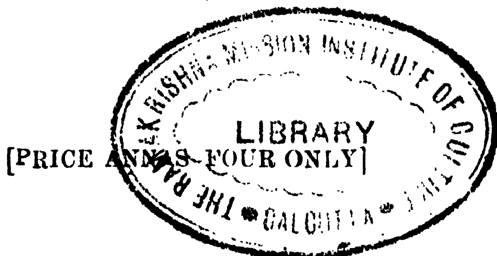
BY

GANDA SINGH,

Research Scholar in Sikh History,

Khalsa College, Amritsar.

[PRICE ANNAS FOUR ONLY]



December, 1935.

First Edition, December 1935.

٦٩- مزن تیغ بر خونِ کس بیدریغ
ترا نیز خون چرخ ریزد به تیغ

١٠٥- ترا گر نظر ہست بر فوج و زر
کہ ما را نگاہست یزدان نگر

١٠٦- کہ او را غرور است بر ملک و مال
و ما را پناہست یزدان اکال

69 Do not wantonly spill the blood of men,
For your own blood as surely will be spilt by death.

105 If you rely on men and gold,
Our eyes are fixed on God, Omnipotent;

106 And if you pride in pelf and power,
Our refuge is God, Eternal.

(Guru Govind Singh : *Zafrnama.*)

ਜ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ।
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ।
ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

If you aspire to play the game of love,
Come with your head in the palm of your hand.
Along this path he who will tread,
Must give his head and waver not.

(Guru Nanak : *Additional Shloks.*)

PREFACE

The first five chapters of this book were written as a series of articles for the press. The appreciation that these articles and their translations in the vernacular press received at the hands of discerning public and competent scholars has encouraged me to publish them in the present form, with only a few additions and alterations.

Originally it was not my intention to include an account of the present agitation. But now the agitation, which was originally a local affair, has assumed larger proportions. Besides, a great deal of ignorance prevails, even among the educated people, regarding the happenings during the past five months. I have, therefore, deemed it necessary to add the sixth chapter and an appendix with a view to bringing the history upto date and placing before the public true facts as gleaned from the official communiques of the Government of the Punjab, from the speeches of His Excellency Sir Herbert Emerson, Governor of the Province, and the Hon'ble Mr. D. J. Boyd,

Finance Member to the Punjab Government, and from the news and correspondence columns and editorials of papers like the *Civil & Military Gazette*, and the *Tribune*, of Lahore.

When the last sheets had been printed, it was pointed out to me by the printers that the stabbing of Sadhu Singh, mentioned on page 77 on the authority of the *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, had not proved fatal. I have not seen any contradiction of this either in the *C. & M. Gazette*, or in any bulletin or communique issued by the Punjab Police or the Director of Information Bureau, nor have I been able to verify it from the Hospital. Hewever, in the interest of historical accuracy, I have included it in the Errata for deletion.

KHALSA COLLEGE, AMRITSAR, GANDA SINGH.
November 25, 1935.

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ERRATA

Page 64, last two lines, *read* comprising *for* compromising.

Page 77, lines 1 and 2, *delete* "and he died at 11 p.m. in the Hospital."

Page 109, marginal note, line 3, *read* pacifying *for* paifying.

Page 112, line 16, *read* untruths *for* untruth'

CONTENTS

Akal Sahai

THE SHAHIDGANJ LAHORE

CHAPTER I

The origin of Shahidganj

Several theories have been advanced by various 'iters regarding the origin and history of the Shahid- ınj and the so-called mosque at Lahore. Accord- g to some of the Muslim writers the Shahidganj ıs got nothing to do with the so-called mosque. hey trace its origin in the execution of the Sikhs the hands of a 'Hindu Vizir who had a personal :ievance against the Sikhs.' [*C. & M. Gazette*, ahore, 28th July, 1935, page 3, col. 2.] The osque in question, they say, was built by Abdullah han, Khan-i- Saman of Prince Dara Shikoh, and it is, therefore, called the Masjid-i-Dara Shikohi or Masjid-i-Abdullah Khan. While according to others the building, said to be the Masjid-i-Dara Shikohi, etc., was not a mosque at all, but was either a *Qatalgah*—a place of execution— or a Qazi's Court,

from where *Fatwas* for the massacre and execution of Sikhs were issued.

As no attempt has yet been made by any writer to trace the origin and subsequent history of the Shahidganj, I have undertaken an independent and impartial investigation of the whole subject with a view to presenting a dispassionate historical account.

§ *THE BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION*

After the massacre of Banda Singh Bahadur and the Sikhs in March-June 1716, 'a royal edict,' says Munshi Danishwar, 'was issued ordering all who belonged to this sect to be indiscriminately put to death wherever found,' and 'to give effect to this mandate a reward,' according to Malcolm, 'was offered for the head of every Sikh.' [*Miftah-ut-Twarikh*, 398 ; *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 85 ; M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, i. 113 ; Forster, *Travels*, i. 271.] This indiscriminate massacre continued for three years. But every effort of Abd-us-Samad Khan Diler-i-Jang failed to stem the surging tide of the Sikhs. He was transferred to the Subedari of Multan in 1726. His youthful son and successor Azad-ud-daulah Nawab Zakriya Khan, Khan Bahadur, took the administration of the province with much greater zeal, determined to smash all opposition and 'to exterminate the whole nation of the Sikhs.' Movable military

detachments of Zakriya Khan scoured the land in search and pursuit of the Sikhs who were hunted down like wild beasts. In hundreds and thousands 'they were daily brought in chains and executed in the streets of Lahore.' The common and most popular site of these executions was the Chowk of the Nakhas, or the Horse Market—the present Landa Bazar—where Minars and Pyramids of their heads were raised, and their headless bodies were at first piled up in large heaps and were then buried in that very place. [*Risalah-i-Sahib Numa*, 198-99; Kanhayalal, *Tarikh-i-Lahore*, 219; Latif, *History of the Punjab*, 193.]

'It was these Minars and Pyramids,' according to the *Risalah-i-Sahib Numa Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab*, page 198-99, 'that the Khalsa called **Shahidganj** in their language.' *Shahidganj* means a 'heap or storehouse of martyrs.' Later on the word *Shahidganj* came to be used for the memorials raised in memory of Martyrs on the site of their martyrdom.

§ *BHAI MANI SINGH*

It was here that Bhai Mani Singh—a saint and scholar revered by all—was hacked to pieces, joint by joint, on Maghar Sudi 5th, 1794 Bikrami, December 1737, under the orders of Zakriya Khan, for his unshaken devotion to the Sikh faith and

refusal to embrace the religion of the Prophet. [*Prachin Panth Prakash*, 277 ; *Encyclopædia of Sikh Literature*, iv. 2846.] Sayyed Muhammad Latif and Nur Ahmad Chishti place the date of the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh still earlier in 1140 A. H, 1727 A. D., only a few months after the appointment of Zakriya Khan to the government of Lahore. [*History of Lahore*, 162 ; *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, 766.]

§ *BHAI TARU SINGH*

The scalp of Bhai Taru Singh, in whose memory the Shahidganj of Bhai Taru Singh stands in the Landa Bazar, was also scraped off here and he succumbed to it on Monday, the 1st of Sawan, 1802 Bikrami, 12th Jamadi-us-Sani 1158 A. H., 1st July 1745 A. D., just a few hours after the death of Zakriya Khan, driving the Khan Bahadur before him as he had predicted. From this day onwards, the place has been called the Shahidganj of Bhai Taru Singh. Sayyed Muhammad Latif tells us that Bhai Taru Singh was offered the usual choice between Islam and death, but as 'he preferred death to apostacy, he was murdered with great tortures.' [Latif, *Lahore*, 161-62; *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 331-32 ; Karam Singh, *Bhai Taru Singh Shahid*, 19.]

The accounts of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, p. 765-66, and Latif's *Lahore*, p. 162, regarding Bhai Mani

Singh and Taru Singh are incorrect on the very face of them when they place their martyrdom 'during the viceroyalty of Mir Manu,' who was appointed the governor of Lahore in the beginning of 1748 (1161 A. H.) after the defeat of Ahmad Shah Abdali at Manupur, near Machhiwara, twenty-one years after the date given by them, *i. e.* 1140 A. H. 1727 A. D. [*Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shah*, Elliot's *History of India*, viii, 108; Beal, *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, 277; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, i. 412-13.]

The names of Sikh martyrs like Haqiqat Rai of Sialkot, Gulzara Singh, Mehtab Singh of Miran Kot, Sabeg Singh of Jambar and his son Shahbaz Singh, etc., may be mentioned among thousands of those who suffered martyrdom here at Lahore in these days of wholesale persecution.

§ *THE PRISONERS OF THE FIRST HOLOCAUST (PAHLA GHALU-GHARA)*

After the death of Khan Bahadur Zakriya Khan on July 1st, 1745, his elder son Yahya Khan became the governor of the Province. We are told by historians of the Punjab that things were even then going on very hard with the Sikhs. Driven out of towns, caught and massacred in their villages, hunted down like wild beasts in the jungles, and

burnt to death in their hiding places in the Punjab, they were reduced to great extremities and forced to take refuge in the eastern and north-eastern hills, in the Lakhi Jungle of the Malwa, and in the sandy deserts of Bikaner.

The policy of persecution was continued by Yahya Khan with much greater vigour, and he detailed detachments of troops for hunting down the Sikhs wherever they could be traced. One such detachment under the Faujdar of Eminabad, Jaspat Rai by name, fell upon the Sikhs near Rori Sahib. In the scuffle that followed, the Faujdar fell dead at the hands of a Sikh, and his troops were defeated. 'The disastrous end of this expedition', says Sayyed Muhammad Latif, 'exasperated the Viceroy, who now sent a large force against them under the command of Lakhpat Rai, the prime minister,' who happened to be the brother of Jaspat Rai. The Sikhs were driven to the north-eastern hills of Parol, Kathuha, and Basohli with a great slaughter of over ten thousand. So great was the massacre that it is still remembered in Sikh history as *Pahla Ghalu-Ghara*, or the First Holocaust.

The Minister brought with him a thousand Sikhs in irons to Lahore. Mounted on bare-backed donkeys, they were paraded in the bazars of the city. They were then taken to the Nakhas or the

horse market, outside the Delhi Gate of the city, as Muhammad Latif tells us, 'and there beheaded, one after another without mercy.' This happened on the 2nd of Jeth, 1803 Bikrami, 2nd June 1746, A. D., O. S. [*Prachin Panth Prakash*, 370-95 ; Ali-ud-Din, *Ibrat Nama*, 105-6 ; *Risala-i-Sahib Numa*, 199-200; Latif, *Histry of the Puniab*, 213 ; Thornton, *History of the Punjab*, i. 187, etc.]

§ *MIR MANNU'S TIME*

Yahya Khan was replaced by his younger brother Hayat-Ullah Shah Nawaz Khan, on 21st March 1747, who, in turn, was driven out of Lahore by Ahmad Shah Abdali on the 11th January, 1748. The Abdali invader was defeated in the battle of Manupur, near Machhiwara, and Mir Muayun-ul-Mulk, popularly known to history as Mir Mannu, son of Wazir Qamar-ud-Din, was appointed governor of Lahore in March 1748.

Mannu is known in history to have been the greatest persecutor of Sikhs, though there had been occasions when the soldiers of the Khalsa fought for him in the battle of Multan against Shah Nawaz Khan in 1749, and in the battles of Lahore and Mahmud Buti against Ahmad Shah Abdali during his third invasion in 1752. According to Latif,

"Firmly established in his authority, Mannu

considered the best mode of chastising the Sikhs. He stationed detachments of troops in all parts infested by the Sikhs with stringent orders to shave their heads and beards wherever they might be found. These measures being rigorously enforced, compelled the votaries of the Guru to conceal themselves in the mountains and jungles. Mir Manu issued strict orders to the hill rajas to seize the Sikhs and send them in irons to Lahore. These orders were obeyed, and hundreds of Sikhs were brought daily to Lahore and butchered at the *Nakhas* or *Shahidgunj* outside the Delhi Gate, in sight of multitudes of spectators. The young Manu became an irreconcilable foe of the Sikhs and was determined to extirpate the nation." [*History of the Punjab*, 220-21.]

[Also see *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, 664-65 ; Ali-ud-Din, *Ibrat Nama*, 240 ; Forster, *Travels*, i. 272-73 ; Thornton, *History of the Punjab*, i. 194-95 ; Kanhaya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, 73.]

It was during the reign of Mir Mannu that Sikh women and children were thrown into the underground dungeons in the compound of the so-called mosque—the origin of which is traced in the next chapter—and subjected to untold tortures, and that

young babes were torn from the arms of their mothers and were hacked to pieces to be hung like necklaces round the necks of their helpless mothers. These dungeons in the compound of the so-called mosque, over which a memorial in the form of a Gurdwara stands at present, are called *Shahidganj Singhanian*.

The details of the tortures inflicted upon the Sikhs, their women and children, are too horrible and painful to describe and the writer would, therefore, refer the inquisitive and truth-seeking reader to the pages of history.

It must have become clear, from what has been written, that the origin of the Shahidganj does not lie in "what a power-flushed Hindu Dewan of Lahore did about two centuries ago," as suggested by the Muslim Correspondent of the *C. & M. Gazette*, but that it lies in the persecution and execution of the Sikhs during the governorship of Abd-us-Samad Khan and his son Khan Bahadur Zakriya Khan, and in the Martyrdoms of Bhai Mani Singh and Taru Singh in 1737 and 1745 respectively, many years before the expedition of Lakhpat Rai in May 1746, which certainly added to its historical importance. But even otherwise, the main responsibility could not be shifted to the shoulders of the Dewan who was only a paid servant of Nawab Yahya Khan and

was detailed for official duty of commanding the expeditionary force against the Sikhs.

The name of Dewan Kaura Mall has been erroneously dragged in by some writers as an accomplice of Mir Mannu in the execution of the Sikhs. According to all historians of the Punjab, Diwan Kaura Mall was a great friend of the Sikhs and did all in his power to help them in those hard days. Any number of historical authorities could be quoted in support of this statement, but the writer would confine himself to only one sentence from the *Travels* of George Forster, who wrote his Journal only thirty years after the death of the Diwan. He says :—

> "Meer Munnoo...made a vigorous attack on them [Sicques] ; and it is supposed that their force would then have been annihilated had not these people found a strenuous advocate in his minister Korah Mul, who was himself of the Khualasah sect, and diverted Meer Munnoo from reaping the full fruits of the superiority he had gained." [*A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I., p. 272-73.]

CHAPTER II

The origin of the so-called mosque and its connection with the Shahidganj

The origin of the Shahidganj has been traced in the preceding chapter. It has been proved that it lies in the persecution and execution of the Sikhs during the governorship of Khan Bahadur Zakriya Khan (beginning with that of his father Abd-us-Samad Khan Diler-i-Jang), in the martyrdoms of Bhai Mani Singh and Taru Singh in 1737 and 1745 respectively, and in the massacre of the Sikhs, and their women and children in the time of Mir Mannu, from the autumn of 1748 to November 1753. In this chapter, an attempt is made to trace the origin of the so-called mosque and its connection with the Shahidganj.

§ *SIX DIFFERENT THEORIES ABOUT ITS ORIGIN*

It is very unfortunate that no contemporary documentary evidence as to the origin of this mosque-shaped building has so far been unearthed,

though there are recorded traditions and historical facts which throw a flood of light on the subject. In the course of my extensive research on this subject I have come across no less than six different and conflicting theories advanced in connection with its origin.

First by Nur Ahmad son of Allah Jawaya of Lahore, on the 12th Rabi-ul-awwal, 1275 A. H. (19th October, 1858), that:—

"Mirza Qurban Beg made gift of the said mosque together with a well built of pacca masonry and thirteen bighas of land to my ancestors Mian Sheikh Din Muhammad and Muhammad Shakir who have remained in possession thereof since the reign of Muhammad Shah as far as the Sikh rule, generation after generation. The Akalis.....made the said mosque desolate after dispossessing my father." [*Paper Book of the Tribunal Case*, p. 418.]

In the course of litigation, which extended over several years, this theory was substantially changed and modified by Nur Ahmad with new stories to suit the requirements of new cases instituted by him.

Second by Sayed Alam Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Lahore, on the 11th July 1883, in

his report on the so-called mosque, that:—

"It is known in the city that the mosque, the *hamam*, the *baghicha* etc., were built by Mir Manu Khan Subedar of Lahore. He issued an order that any Sikh who was found should be beheaded, and his head kept near the said mosque, and that when heads were collected, he used to get them buried." (*Paper Book of the Tribunal Case*, 222.)

Third by Nur Ahmad Chishti in his book, the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, on page 116, that:—

"Both of these mosques [to the east of Serai of Mohd. Sultan, one in possession of the Railway Officials and the other in that of the Sikhs] were built in the reign of Aurangzeb Alamgir."

Fourth by the same person on page 763 of the above *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, that:—

"After the completion of the *hamam*, he [Abdullah Khan] laid the foundation of this mosque in 1064 A.H. [1653-4 A. D.] because, being appointed the Kotwal of Lahore for some time, he used to hold his Court in the Nakhas or the Market-place."

The date 1064 A. H. or 1653-4 A.D., corresponds to the reign of Shahjehan and the time of Dara Shikoh, who was murdered in 1659 by Aurangzeb

after his own accession in 1658.

Fifth by Sayed Habib in the *Siyasat*, Lahore, dated 1st Rabi-us-Sani, 1354 A. H., 3rd July, 1935, page 3, col. 1, that:—

"The mosque in question is a monument of the Mughal days. Its foundation was laid by Hazrat Mian Mir (May God bless him). He is the same saint who laid the foundation of the holiest of the Sikh temples, the Darbar Sahib of Amritsar."*

Sixth by Sayed Mohsin Shah, Advocate, High Court, Joint Secretary, Anjuman-i-Islamia, Lahore, in his statement before the Gurdwara Tribunal on the 19th August, 1929, when he appeared before that Court on behalf of the Anjuman to press the claim of the Muslim Community, for the restoration of the so-called mosque, in persuance of petition No. 1282, that:—

"I cannot say when this mosque was founded,

* It may be mentioned here that the original building of the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Amritsar, the foundation-brick of which is said to have been laid by Hazrat Mian Mir, a friend and admirer of Guru Arjan, was more than once demolished and blown up with gun-powder by the Muhammadan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali and his deputies in 1757 and 1762.

The present building was erected by the Sikh Sardars, under the supervision of Bhai Des Raj, at a cost of nine lacs, after the defeat of Zain Khan and the conquest of Sirhind in 1763, when *Sultan-ul-Qaum Badshah* Jassa Singh Ahluwalia contributed Rs. 4,83,000 and the other Sardars Rs. 4,17,000.

but it appears to be a hundred years old. I do not know who was the original founder of the mosque, nor do I know who was its last *Mutwali*."

Very fruitful imagination seems to have been at work, either for litigation or agitation purposes, in connection with the origin of this so-called mosque. Theories No. 1, 3 and 5 may be simply dismissed as incredible, having no documentary evidence or historical back-ground to support them. The conflicting and self-contradictory acconnts of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*,which is full of historical inaccuracies and anachronisms in placing the martyrdoms of Mani Singh (1737) and Taru Singh (1745), in the same week as the death of Mir Mannu (1753), on page 765, and also in 1140 A H. (1727 A. D.) on the following page 766, cannot be accepted as authoritative at this time by an impartial student of history when he knows that, in addition to all this, its author Nur Ahmad, was a brother-in-faith of the claimant of this place, and that the book was written during the days of litigation. Moreover the book is more descriptive than historical. Nur Ahmad clearly says that he does not profess to play the role of a historian.

The discovery of basketfuls of human bones, and complete headless human skeletons from the

foundations of the arches and walls of the so-called mosque go a long way to disprove that it could have been built during the reign of earlier Mughals. There had been no execution of the Sikhs on so large a scale from the time of Jahangir to that of Aurangzeb. It was only in the eighteenth century that executioner's sword fell so heavily on the neck of the Sikhs, and, according to all the historians of the Punjab, from Bute Shah *alias* Ghulam Muhay-ud-Din Alavi Qadri and Ali-ud-Din to Ghulam Sarwar and Sayyed Muhammad Latif, including the English writers, the execution of the Sikhs was at its highest during the governorship of Mir Mannu (1748-1753), whose name is still remembered in the Sikh saying of of those days:—

"*Mannu asadi datri, asin Mannu de soe,*
Jion jion Mannu wadhda asin dun sawae hoe."
(Mannu is a sickle and we the spontaneous green growth;
The more he cuts us, the more we grow.)

In view of the above, the theory No. 4 of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti* that Abdullah Khan, Khan-i-Saman of Prince Dara Shikoh, laid the foundation of this mosque in 1064 A. H. (1653-54), during the

time of Dara Shikoh, is also demolished. There are a few more points which would explode this theory entirely.

§ *MASJID-I-DARA SHIKOHI*

It is true that a mosque of the time of Dara Shikoh did stand in the Nakhas at the time when Nur Ahmad Chishti wrote his *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti* in 1284 A. H. or 1867 A. D. It stood '*Nim Bismal,*' or half demolished, upto 1884 when Lala Kanhayalal wrote his *Tarikh-i-Lahore.* (See p. 365.) But it must be clearly understood that this mosque stood to the *south* of Sultan's Serai as stated and accepted by the Muslim Correspondent of the *C. & M. Gazette* (August 8, 1935, p. 2, column 4), who further makes it quite clear when he says that " this mosque is not to be confounded with the handsome two-storeyed mosque, east of Sultan's Serai." Nur Ahmad Chishti, the author of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, 1867, also gives the same situation *south* of the Serai of Muhammad Sultan which is confirmed by Sayyed Muhammad Latif twenty-five years later in his *History of Lahore*, p. 64. But the mosque-shaped building demolished by the Sikhs was situated to the *east*, and not to the south, and could not, therefore, be the mosque referred to above, the

one built by Abdullah Khan dnring the reign of Aurangzeb or in the time of Dara Shikoh as stated by the Muslim correspondent and by the author of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, theories Nos. 3 and 4.

Besides, the two-storeyed mosque to the *east* of Sultan's Serai could not be the building demolished by the Sikhs, because the building demolished by them was only a one-storeyed building and not two-storeyed.

The mosque of the time of Dara Shikoh, mentioned by Latif on p. 170 and p. 96 of the *History of Lahore*, 'was the magnificent mosque of Sitara Begam, the consort of Prince Dara Shikoh, opposite the Sultan's Serai to the east' (in fact to the south), and was the same mosque to the south of the Serai mentioned on p. 64. As to its building, it might have been erected by Abdullah Khan for and under the instructions of Dara Shikoh. It could not have been built by Abdullah Khan during the reign of Aurangzeb in 1064 A. H. (1653-54 A. D.) The date 1064 A. H. (1653-54 A. D.) cannot be reconciled with the time of Aurangzeb's reign, as Aurangzeb caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor on the first anniversary of his accession, in July 1659, six years after the date of the building of the mosque.

There is a great confusion in the accounts of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, from which Sayyed Muhammad Latif also has not been able to escape.

It may be stated further that the above mentioned mosque of Dara Shikoh was converted into the private 'residence of Mr. O'Welby, the manager of the old *Lahore Chronicle*. It then became the property of some railway official from whom it was purchased by one Sultan, who, however, demolished it for the sake of its bricks.' This Sultan is the well-known Muhammad Sultan, the Muhammadan contractor of Lahore, who demolished numerous Muslim mosques and mausoleums for the sake of bricks, using those bricks for the building of his *Serai* in the Landa bazar and a fine house for himself. (Latif, *Lahore*, p. 96, 170 ; Kanhayalal, *Lahore*, p. 95, 365.)

§ *SAYYED ALAM SHAH'S THEORY*

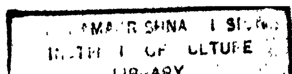
Now about theory No. 2 of Sayed Alam Shah that the alleged mosque, etc., were built by Nawab Mir Mannu Khan of Lahore in about 1750. This is the only theory that appears to be consistent with history. The same view has been taken by the President of the Gurdwara Tribunal, Mr. Justice Hilton. The learned counsel for the Anjuman-i-Islamia, when pleading his case before the Gurdwara Tribunal for the restoration

of this building to the Muhammadan community, with all available authorities and documents placed at his disposal, also put forward the same theory. The author of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti*, also tells us, on p. 762, that the building in question was in the possession of the sons of Abdullah Khan, *brother* of Nawab Khan Bahadur, son of Abd-us-Samad Khan (not a servant of Dara Shikoh or a Kotwal of Aurangzeb), after the Nizamat of their father. This Abdullah Khan was a Turani noble in the middle of the eighteenth century, about ninety years after the murder of Dara Shikoh and about forty years after the death of Aurangzeb. In all probability, it was this Abdullah Khan, brother of Zakriya Khan (and *not* any Abdullah Khan of the time of Dara Shikoh or Aurangzeb), who built this place, for or at the suggestion of Mir Mannu, in about 1750 A. D. The author of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti* appears to have confounded this Abdullah Khan with a namesake of his of the time of Dara Shikoh or Aurangzeb. The date 1750 A. D. corresponds to 1164 Al-Hijri. Here also the author of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti* has erred in reading the date 1164 as 1064 from some old Persian or Urdu manuscript, wherein the dots of zeros are seldom distinguishable from the small standing lines of ones, and has thus taken the date of the building of this place

back by a century to the reign of Shahjehan or the time of Dara Shikoh.

§ *CONCLUSION*

In the light of what has been written above, the case is quite clear now, and the discovery of heaps of human bones and skeletons from the foundations of the walls and arches, and of human skulls from the central dome of the building and from a well in its compound, can now be easily explained that the building in question was raised, in about 1750 A. D., on the dead bodies and bones and skeletons of thousands of Sikhs massacred and buried in this place during the time of Mir Mannu, and also of his predecessors, when the execution of the Sikhs was at its highest. Sayyed Alam Shah clearly states in his report that Mannu "had issued an order that any Sikh who was found should be beheaded and his head kept near the said mosque, and that when heads were collected, he used to get them buried." This is confirmed by Mufti Ali-ud-Din in his *Ibrat Nama*, adding that "wells were filled with the heads of executed Sikhs" (p. 110). The building was given the shape of a mosque, apparently, by the power-flushed and over-zealous Muhammadan ruler who perhaps considered it a mark of his



triumph or a glorious act to have raised a mosque-shaped building over the dead bodies of *Kafirs*, as he considered the Sikhs to be. But, unfortunately, this came to be done against the explicit teachings of Islam, as expounded by some of the Muslim writers in these days.

We are indebted to the Muslim correspondent of the *C. & M. Gazette*, Lahore, who enlightens us on an important religious point, and, without questioning his religious authority, we wish the learned writer had quoted the chapter and verse of the holy *Quran* to make his statement more authoritative.

He says: 'Islam definitely forbids the use of a mosque as anything but a mosque' (*C. & M. Gazette* Lahore, August 8, 1935, p. 2, column 5), and that 'the *Muslims are forbidden by their religion to use a mosque as a place of execution.* In fact killing is the very last thing permissable in the precincts of a mosque.' (*C. & M. Gazette*, July 27, 1935, p. 3, Col. 2.)

This is supported by another writer in the *Zamindar*, Lahore, dated 20th August, 1935. According to him even an ant is not allowed to be killed in a mosque, that every such mosque is a حرم—*Harram*—a sanctuary, and that, according to the *Quran*, killing is strictly prohibited in a *Harram*.

This means that neither a mosque can be built in a place of execution, nor can execution be allowed in a mosque. But, in this place, killing, unfortunately, was the first and the last thing. That it was used as a place of execution, nay that its foundations were laid on the dead bodies of those executed here, has been established, beyond doubt, by historical evidence and by the discovery of human bones and skeletons from its foundations. The building did not, therefore, according to Islam, deserve the name of a mosque. Nor could it have been ever used as a mosque—a place of Muslim worship—by true Muhammadans, because to call it a mosque, or to use it as such, is a contravention, in word and deed, of the teachings of Islam.

§ *WAS IT EVER USED AS A MOSQUE ?*

The reader will be gratified to learn that in all the historical works that have been consulted on the subject, and those which have been so extensively quoted by various writers, there is not a single line to establish, or even to suggest, that the building in question, though shaped like a mosque, has ever been used as a mosque—a place for calling the faithful to prayer.

The only use that it could be put to was

that of a court or a place of persecution and execution. This appears to have been done either by Mir Mannu himself, or by Abdullah Khan during his Nizamat of Lahore (when he used to hold his court in the Nakhas), after which it passed into the possession of his sons as stated by Nur Ahmad Chishti on p. 762 of the *Tahqiqat-i-Chishti.*

Mosque can be used as a court

That mosques can be used as Qazis' Courts is confirmed by the *Inqilab*, a Muslim Daily of Lahore, in its issue of the 7th August, 1935, p. 2, column 3.

Mosques used for anti-Government activities

As to their use for political purposes, it transpires from the record of the great State Trial in 1864, conducted by Sir Herbert B. Edwards, K. C. B., K. C. S. I., D. C. L., LL. D., that mosques were then hotbeds of disloyalty and rebellion and were used for purposes of most treasonable nature of creating and helping disturbances on the North-Western Frontier, which cost the Government of India no less than twenty distinct military expeditions, from 1850 to 1863, aggregating 60,000 Regular Troops, besides Irregular Auxiliaries and Police.

It was at this time that Dr. Sir William Hunter, M. A., LL. D., K. C. S. I., C. I. E., I. C. S., Director General of Statistics to the Govern-

ment of India, had to sound an unpleasant note of warning that "the Mussalmans of India are, and have been for many years, a source of chronic danger to the British power in India," and that "it is hopeless to look for anything like enthusiastic loyalty from our Muhammadan subjects." [*Our Indian Mussalmans*, p. 11,141.]

Mosque converted into a museum

"While we in Lahore," writes the *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, dated the 21st September 1935, "are witnessing demonstrations in connection with the Shahidganj mosque agitation, another mosque which has played an historical part in Islam, the mosque of St. Sophia in Istambul, has almost silently been converted by Turks, who now take a modernist view of life, into a museum of Byzantine Art... St. Sophia has been used as a mosque for over five hundred years after the Turks captured Constantinople, the modern Istambul."

§ *"ONCE A MOSQUE EVER A MOSQUE"?*

In addition to this the recently advanced argument of "Once a mosque, ever a mosque," does not stand the test of historical scrutiny. Nor could the learned counsel for the Anjuman-i-Islamia, when pleading his case before the Gurdwara Tribunal, cite any authority to support this proposition. Any number

of instances could be quoted where mosques were demolished by Muhammadans themselves and their sites and materials appropriated for purposes other than religious, but the writer would confine himself to the following few from the city of Lahore itself:—

1. The mosque of Sitara Begam was demolished by Muhammad Sultan, contractor of Lahore, using its bricks and materials for his *serai*, shops and residence. On its site stands the Railway Technical Institute. (Latif, *Lahore*, 170.)
2. The mosque of Kasim Khan was pulled down by Sardar Khan, Lambardar of Mozang, who sold its bricks at a great profit. The site has been used for the Government House. (Latif, *Lahore*, 296.)
3. A portion of the Sufiwali mosque was dismantled and its site was sold to the Water Works Department for Rs. 500. (Kanhaya Lal, *Lahore*, 176.)
4. The mosque of Nur Muhammad Imanwala was dismantled and reduced to half the original size, and the site of the dismantled portion was sold to the Water Works Department. (*Ibid*, 178.)
5. A small mosque to the east of the Golden

Mosque was demolished, and on its site was erected a staircase. (*Ibid*, 149.)

6. One Dilawar Khan, Daroga, took forcible possession of a portion of Masjid-i-Muftian and built a *haveli* for himself in its courtyard. (*Ibid*, 173.)

At Amritsar, an old mosque in *Baghicha Shaikh Buddha*, near the Muslim High School, Hussainpura, has lately been demolished by its Muslim owners, and on its site has been raised a fine residential *Kothi*.

(The *Hindustan*, Lahore, dated Sept. 15, 1935.)

§ *IT WAS THE REAL SHAHIDGANJ*

As to the connection of the alleged mosque with the Shahidganj, there can be no question. In fact the so-called mosque itself was the real *Shahidganj*, the *Ganj* of the *Shahids*, or the storehouse of martyrs, not only because it stood in the place or on the site of the execution of thousands of Sikhs, but because it was raised on the dead bodies of those martyred here and its walls were literally the Minars and Pyramids of the martyrs whose skeletons and bones have now been excavated.

Not only for this. It was the so-called mosque itself that was turned into a *Dharamsala*, a place of Sikh worship, and named the *Shahidganj* when the Bhangi Sardars occupied Lahore in 1764 and took

possession of this building only thirteen years after its erection. [See Sayyed Alam Shah's *Report.*] And later on, when much of its importance was transferred to the newly raised memorial, the Shahidganj of Bhai Taru Singh, it was shown in the Government records "as belonging to *Shahidganj*" under Khasra No. 403 of the Settlement of 1856 and Khasra No. 161 of the Settlement of 1868. [Vide *Tribunal Case Paper Book.*]

CHAPTER III

Shahidganj Lahore: Its History from 1750 to 1849

§ *THE LAST DAYS OF MIR MANNU*

The death of Maharaja Diwan Kaurah Mall, on the 12th April, 1752, in the battle of Mahmud Buti, during the third invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali, robbed the Sikhs of their chief (and perhaps the only) friend in the Government of Lahore. Muayun-ul-Mulk—Mir Mannu - the Governor, on the other hand, at this time was relieved of all fears of disturbance from the west. The Province of Lahore was ceded to the Abdali at the conclusion of the third invasion, and Mannu was confirmed as its governor on behalf of the invader. He, therefore, turned, without the slightest hitch or hindrance, to his highly cherished desire of exterminating the Sikhs.

Movable columns of troops were despatched under Sayyed Jamil-ud-Din, his Bakhshi Ghazi Beg and Khwaja Mirza all over the country for hunting down the Sikhs wherever they might be traced. To

make matters worse for them even in out-of-the-way villages and their hiding places, a price was fixed on their heads. Whosoever brought a Sikh, man, woman or child, dead or alive, received a reward of ten rupees per head. The unfortunate victims, who were caught alive and brought to Lahore, were executed in the *Nakhas*, now called the *Shahidganj* area, which may rightly be called the *Kerbela of the Sikhs*. According to Sayyed Alam Shah, their heads were kept near the so-called mosque in the *Nakhas*, and when the heads were collected, in a sufficient number, he (Mannu) used to get them buried or thrown into wells. Thus, thousands of Sikhs perished under the orders of Mannu.

§ *MANNU'S DEATH*

On several occasions Mannu himself led these Sikh-hunting expeditions. On one such occasion when a number of Sikh women and children were being tortured in the subterranean dungeons in the compound of the so-called mosque and Mannu was encamped at Mullapur, information was brought to him that some Sikhs were hiding in the sugar-cane fields nearby. Mannu at once hurried to the place and surrounded them. The Sikhs were reduced to great extremities and there was no way out for them. As a last despe-

rate step to cut through their besiegers, they levelled their muskets at Mannu and fired a volley. The bullets could not penetrate through the thick sugar-canes and made no effect upon him. But his horse was very much frightened by the sound and became unmanageable. Mannu was thrown off his seat and he fell to the ground. But, as ill-luck would have it, his one foot got entangled in the stirrup, and he was dragged along the earth until he died. This happened on the 7th of Muharram, 1167 A. H., 4th November, 1753 A. D. There was now all confusion at Lahore and the soldiers would not allow his dead body to be buried until the arrears of their salaries had been paid. His masterful widow, Murad Begum, also called Mughalani Begum, however, tactfully handled the situation, paid up the arrears, and brought the body to Lahore and buried it.

During the confusion that followed the death of Mannu, a band of Sikhs rushed to Lahore, broke open the eastern wall of the underground dungeon (in the compound of the so-called mosque), and rescued the surviving women and children from the jaws of impending doom. Since then the place has been called SHAHIDGANJ SINGHANIAN, and a memorial, in the form of a Gurdwara, now stands over that dungeon in memory

of those who, when offered the usual choice between Islam and death, preferred to lay down their lives at the altar of their faith.

§ *MURAD BEGUM TO KABULI MALL (1753-1764)*

After the death of Mir Mannu, his masterful widow, Murad Begum, obtained the governorship of Lahore, by an act of duplicity, both from the Court of Delhi and the Durrani King of Kabul, for her three years old son, Amin-ud-Din, with herself as his regent and Mir Momin Khan as his deputy. The infant governor died soon after and the reins of government were taken over by the Begum herself. Her duplicity was soon discovered, and Wazir Ghazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk marched upon the province. Sayyed Jamil-ud-Din made her a prisoner in her own bed at Lahore and sent her to the camp of Imad-ul-Mulk at Machhiwara, where she purchased her liberty by the offer of her daughter's hand in marriage to the Wazir. Her entreaties brought her Abdali patron to India on his fourth invasion, at the conclusion of which he left his son Taimur as the governor of Lahore. The forces of Taimur's deputies were defeated by the Sikhs in the battles of Mahilpur and Jullundur and he was driven out of the province. The Sikhs occupied Lahore, with Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as their *Padshah*, in 1758, but the

jealousy of Adina Beg against his Sikh allies soon brought in the Mahrattas who, in turn, were beaten off by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1760. This fifth invasion of the Abdali and the battle of Panipat, 1761, sealed the fate of the Mahrattas for some thirty years to come. Haji Karim Dad Khan, appointed as the governor of Lahore on the flight of the Mahrattas, was replaced by Sarbuland Khan who was transferred to Multan, and Khwaja Obed became the Subedar in his place on the return of the invader to his country.

The Sikhs had by this time acquired sufficient power and established themselves in the territory conquered by them. Their ultimate aim was the *RAJ OF THE KHALSA*, or the Rule of the Pure. Khwaja Obed mobilized a large force to crush the rising power of the Sikhs and moved out of the capital to reduce the Sikh stronghold of Gujranwala. The Sikh *Misaldars* collected to meet the common enemy, and Sardar Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, the master of the fort, reinforced by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi, Gujar Singh and others, beat off the Khwaja. Obed had to fly for his life, leaving all his bag and baggage in the field to become the property of the Sikhs. They next routed Saadat Khan and Sadiq Beg Khan, the Durrani Faujdars in the Jullundur Doab, and occupied the territory.

§ *SECOND HOLOCAUST (DUSRA WADDA GHALU-GHARA)*

This was soon followed by the sixth invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Sikhs were then engaged in the siege of Jandiala. Under a misunderstanding they raised the siege and went to the Malwa districts to escort their families from that jungle to a place of safety in the Anandpur hills. But, as ill-luck would have it, they were all overtaken by the Abdali. About eighteen to twenty thousand Sikhs, most of whom were unarmed women and children and old and infirm men, were slain near the villages of Kup and Rahira on the 4th February, 1762. This great carnage is known as *Dusra Wadda Ghalu-Ghara* or the Second Great Holocaust. It was too great a loss for a small community of the Sikhs of those days.

§ *GOLDEN TEMPLE OF AMRITSAR DEMOLISHED AND DESECRATED BY AHMAD SHAH*

On his way back to Lahore, in the last days of February, 1762, Ahmad Shah razed to the ground the Sikh Temple, called Har Mandir (also called the Golden Temple) built by Guru Arjan at Amritsar and desecrated the Pool of Immortality by killing cows on its banks and throwing their blood and bones and the debris of the temple around it, into

the water. (Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, ii. 437.) While according to Ali-ud-Din's *Ibrat Nama* and others, it was blown up with gunpowder, and barley was sown into the levelled ground.

But all this failed to crush the rising power of the Sikhs. On the contrary, the Abdali's wanton outrage on their holiest shrine roused them to their highest exertion. With the Word of Guru Nanak on their lips and the Sword of Guru Govind Singh in their hands, the soldiers of the Khalsa rushed out of their hiding places and *garhis*. There was now nothing to stem their surging tide and the Abdali rule in the Punjab became impossible in future.

§ *THE CONQUEST OF SIRHIND*

As early as May, 1762, they appeared at Sirhind and received a tribute of fifty thousand rupees from Governor Zain Khan. But on their return, his troops treacherously looted their rear-guard. The Sikhs, thereupon, turned upon their heels and inflicted a crushing defeat upon Zain Khan and his Diwan, Lachhmi Narayan. In the autumn of the following year the Khalsa assembled at Amritsar and passed a *Gurmata*, a resolution in the presence of the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*, on the Diwali day, 4th November 1763, resolving to restore their sacred Tank and Temple of Amritsar and to proclaim their

independence. They first subdued the Pathans of Kasur and the Afghans of Malerkotla, who had been the chief allies of the Abdali in his invasions of the country, and then, in December 1763, directed their attack upon Sirhind. Zain Khan came out to meet them, but was defeated and slain in January 1764. The parganahs of Sirhind were divided amongst the various Sikh Sardars, while Sirhind proper, which no one would accept on account of its association with the ghastly murder of the young children of Guru Govind Singh, was presented as an offering—*Ardasa karwa ditta giya*—to Bhai Buddha Singh.

§ *THE SIKH OCCUPATION OF LAHORE*

On the west, Jehan Khan had suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Sikhs (November, 1763), and the power of the Afghan had been severely shaken. Lahore was attacked in February, 1764, during the governorship of Kabuli Mall, but its occupation was deferred till the retreat of Ahmad Shah from his seventh invasion (March, 1764), when his success and stay in the country was rendered impossible by the stout resistance offered by the Sikhs. And no sooner had he turned his back upon Lahore than the three Sikh Sardars, Lehna Singh, Gujar Singh and Sobha Singh of the Bhangi Confederacy, attacked

and captured the city and divided it among themselves. From this time onwards, Lahore remained in possession of the Sikhs for full eighty-five years upto 1849, except for a week or two when the Sardars voluntarily retired on one or two occasions.

§ *THE BHANGI SARDARS AND THE SHAHIDGANJ*

To return to the Shahidganj. With the conquest of Lahore, the Bhangi Sardars took in hand the erection of memorials to the Sikhs martyred in the city. Naturally, their eyes, first of all, fell upon the *Nakhas.* The memory of thousands of Sikhs, men, women and children, mercilessly persecuted, butchered and buried in this place, was still fresh. The scenes of their horrible persecution and wholesale massacre, unceasingly continued for about four decades, 1716-1753, were too dreadful to be forgotten in ten years. The *Nakhas* was, therefore, occupied, and also the connected buildings, including the mosque-shaped structure raised in about 1750 over the dead bodies of martyred Sikhs.

The Bhangi Sardars and the Sikhs must have then—about thirteen years after the erection of the building—been aware that the real SHAHIDGANJ of the Sikhs, or the Place of Martyrs, was the mosque-shaped building, because it stood not only on the actual spot of the execution of thousands of

Sikhs, but that its foundations and walls contained the dead bodies of their martyred brethren. They perhaps also knew that the heads of the executed Sikhs had been kept and buried in the precincts of the so-called mosque and that wells had been filled with them. Every inch of the place was, therefore, sacred to them, and they dedicated it to the sacred cause. They converted the so-called mosque—not in shape, but in use—into a *Dharamsala* or a place of Sikh worship, and named it Shahidganj. Sayyed Alam Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner of Lahore, bears testimony to it in his Report of 1883 in the following words :—

> "As in the Sikh community the Akalis were orthodox in their religion, they took possession of the mosque, turned it into a *Dharamsala* and named it *Shahidganj*, as the Sikhs, according to their religious faith, regard those people, whose heads were cut off and buried, as martyrs. For the said very reason they gave it the name of *Shahidganj*."

The so-called mosque, under the new name of Shahidganj, was divided into three portions. The central chamber was used as Gurdwara proper, where *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs, was installed and recited. The southern

portion was set apart for *Guru ka Langar*, or free kitchen, and the northern portion served as a storehouse. A portion of the *hamam* was used as *Sukhe-di-Deg* and *Sabeel*, from where *bhang* and water were freely distributed to all visitors and travellers.

A few paces to the north of the Shahidganj proper was erected a one-domed memorial in the form of a Gurdwara, called Shahidganj Bhai Taru Singh,* in memory of Bhai Taru Singh whose scalp was scraped off alive in June, 1745, on his refusal to abjure the Sikh faith and to accept Islam.

The dungeons, in the precincts of the so-called mosque, now named the Shahidganj, where women and children were imprisoned and tortured during the governorship of Mir Mannu, were preserved, as they were, and were given the name of *SHAHID-GANJ SINGHANIAN.*

The Shahidganj proper, the so-called mosque, the Shahidganj Bhai Taru Singh, the newly raised monument, and the Shahidganj Singhanian, the subterranean dungeons, were placed in the charge of a religious-minded Sikh, Bhai Jagga Singh. He was a citizen of Lahore and had been devotedly attached to the venerable martyrs, Bhai Mani Singh and Bhai Taru Singh, and was, therefore, the fittest person to look after this sacred 'Place of

Martyrs.' The Sardars also made to him the gift of fifteen bighas of land of the Nakhas, with five wells, for the upkeep and maintenance of these shrines.

§ *GREAT INTEREST TAKEN BY MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH IN THE SHAHIDGANJ*

Sardar Lehna Singh, Sobha Singh and Gujjar Singh were succeeded by Chet Singh, Mohar Singh and Sahib Singh, from whom Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the 'Lion of the Punjab,' conquered Lahore in 1799 and laid the foundation of the Sikh Empire. He took great interest in the maintenance of the Shahidganj Gurdwaras. He not only confirmed the gift of land made by the Bhangi Sardars, but made additional grants of land in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar for the purpose to Bhai Jiwan Singh, son and successor of Bhai Jagga Singh, the first Mahant. A paragraph from Sayyed Muhammad Latif's *Lahore*, p. 162, on the subject is given below :—

"Maharaja Ranjit Singh entertained great reverence for this Place of Martyrs. He was in the habit of paying visits to it, and had made grants of land in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar for its maintenance. It was the practice to place Rs. 100 every night below the pillow of Ranjit Singh, which were distributed as alms to the poor every morning

through Bhai Ram Singh. Out of this hundred, five rupees a day went to *Shahidganj* as a contribution for the cost of *Bhang*, and in addition to it, twenty-five rupees were daily sent by the Maharaja for the alms-house."

The Muafis and Jagirs granted and confirmed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh for the Shahidganj may be summarised as follows :—

Rs. 5 daily for *Sukhe-di-deg*.

Rs. 25 daily for *Langar* expenses.

Rs. 1,100 Jagir in the ilaqa of Tarn Taran.

Muafi land in the village of Chuchakwal.

Muafi Land in the village of Bral (District Lahore).

Muafi land in the village of Sharakpur (District Lahore), with a well yielding Rs. 50.

One well in Bela Wasti Ram in the neighbourhood of Lahore.

Muafi land with five wells in the ilaqa of Nakhas.

The Maharaja of Patiala also contributed Rs. 100 per annum towards the *Langar*.

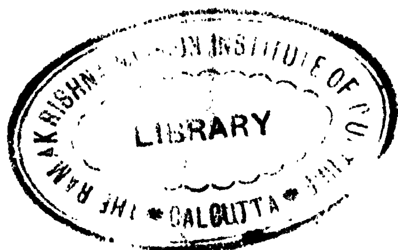
In addition to this, the Shahidganj Gurdwara was entitled to *Chungi* or octroi duty of the grain markets of Lahore at the following rates :—

One chhatak for every donkey-load.

Two chhataks for every bullock-load.

Half a seer for every camel-load.

The Maharaja died in June 1839, but the interest taken by him in this 'Place of Martyrs' was continued by his successors, Maharajas Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dulip Singh up to the dissolution of the Sikh Empire in 1849, when the Punjab was annexed to the dominions of the British Indian Government. The British Government also confirmed the Jagir of Rs. 1800 per annum in the name of Bhai Jiwan Singh, for the expenses of Shahidganj during his life time, to be reduced after his death to Rs. 150 per annum as 'Perpetually Muaf' on paying one-fourth of it as *Nazrana* into the Government treasury.



CHAPTER IV

Its History from 1850 to 1935
Period of Litigation

§ *CASES INSTITUTED BY NUR AHMAD*

Encouraged by the change of the Government of the country,one Nur Ahmad, son of Allah Jawaya, resident of Lahore, instituted a criminal case on the 17th April 1850, against Bhai Jiwan Singh and Ganda Singh in respect of the so-called Shahidganj mosque and the land attached thereto, in the Court of Major George M'Gregor, Deputy Commissioner. He claimed that Mirza Qurban Beg had made gift of the said mosque (called the Mosque of Mirza Qurban Beg) together with a well built of pacca masonry and thirteen bighas of land (cultivated) to his ancestors, Mian Sheikh Din Muhammad and Muhammad Shakir, and that it should, therefore, be made over to him. The Deputy Commissioner was not convinced of the genuineness of the claim. "Accordingly it was ordered by the aforesaid officer on the 1st May, 1850, that the Mosque could not

be released."

The plaintiff then filed an appeal from the said order in the Court of the Commissioner, Lahore Division. The Commissioner of Lahore dismissed the appeal of Nur Ahmad and upheld the order of the District Court on the 29th June 1850.

After that, on the 18th January 1853, the plaintiff again instituted a regular Civil Suit in respect of the so-called mosque, shops, etc. It was dismissed, with costs, on the 2nd February 1853, in view of the previous orders.

Finding that there was no hope of success in the District and Commissioner's Courts, Nur Ahmad, like a professional litigant as he appears to be, tried the Settlement Department. At first on the 26th September 1853, he instituted a trial case "for three *kanals* and fifteen *marlas* of site under Mosque," against Bhai Jiwan Singh in the Court of Mirza Kalab Abid Khan, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Lahore. Hoping that his co-religionist officer might grant the decree in his favour, he filed another application on the 14th January 1854, for the possession of thirteen bighas of cultivated land of Muafi estate with a well, mosque, etc., praying, "that in case (possesssion of) the mosque is awarded, the Muafi land attached thereto which is an inseparable adjunct of

the mosque, may also be awarded." But Mirza Kalab Abid Khan ordered on the 11th December 1854, that :—

> "It is not in my power to award him the said property in view of the ejectment case [dismissed by the Deputy Commissioner, Lahore, and the Commissioner, Lahore Division] merely on the strength of the documents, which are in his possession or for the reason that Hindus can have no right in a mosque or buildings attached thereto, or that in all cases such properties are gifted to *Mutwallis* (custodians) as donees by the owner and founder among the Muhammadans. The applicant has, therefore, been told that I cannot mend him the muafi land from the Akalis."

He then preferred an appeal from this order on the 25th February 1855, to Sir Henry Davis, the then Settlement Officer. In his decision Sir Henry dismissed the appeal of Nur Ahmad and the order of Agha Kalab Abid Khan was maintained.

Major George M'Gregor, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore, who had dismissed the claim of Nur Ahmad in 1850, had been transferred from the district in 1854. The Commissioner of the Lahore Division, who had upheld the Deputy Commissioner's order, had also gone. Nur Ahmad, therefore, filed a

new case in the Court of the new Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Robert Simson, on the 23rd June 1855, in *forma paupris*, against Ganda Singh and his father Jiwan Singh, with a new story.

In the *Wasiat-nama* dated 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal 1275, Nur Ahmad had declared :—

"Mirza Qurban Beg made gift of the said mosque with a well built of pacca masonry and thirteen bighas of land (cultivated) to my ancestors Mian Sheikh Din Muhammad and Muhammad Shakir who have remained in possession thereof since the reign of Muhammad Shah as far as the Sikh rule, generation after generation. The Akalis in the Sikh rule forcibly and high-handedly made the said mosque desolate *after dispossessing my father*."

In his application dated 26th September 1853, in the court of Mirza Kalab Abid Khan E. A. C. Lahore, he had written :—

"I had been holding as Mutwali since the time of my forefathers about three kanals and fifteen marlas of land, situated at Nakhas, Chauk Nakhas, gifted by the Kings in 1134 to Malak Kamal and Chandu, manager of the mosque, to meet the expenses of the said mosque. Jiwan Singh, etc., defendants showed

high-handedness and exercised oppression and made the building of the mosque their parlour. *As I was poor, I could not offer any resistance in any way.*"

The same 3 kanals and 15 marlas of land had also been claimed as "*site under mosque.*"

The new story now advanced in the court of the new Deputy Commissioner was :—

"During the reign of Emperor Alamgir, Mirza Qurban Beg built the aforesaid mosque, shops, well and hammam, in suit, and gifted the same to our grandfather. A *Khanqah* was constructed by Muhammad Bakhsh and Fateh Muhammad, our *murids*, eight or nine years ago. We have since been in continuous possession of the said property. Kahan Singh Akali had been in possession of the aforesaid mosque *for the last ten years.* He died sonless a year ago. The defendants, having fraudulently represented themselves to be the disciples of Kahan Singh, have taken possession of the property."

The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Robert Simson, heard the case in several sittings from June to November 1855. He examined the records and witnesses of both the sides. Even the witnesses of the plaintiff Nur Ahmad himself refuted and disproved

his contention. Jawaya and Pir Bakhsh, witnesses for the plaintiff, stated :—

"We *never* saw the plaintiff in possession of the house. We have been hearing from him that he was formerly in possession thereof. *We have been seeing the defendants in possession for a long time.*"

The plaintiff himself produced Abid Ali, and Sultan as witnesses. Abid Ali stated :—

"*I have never seen the plaintiff or his ancestors in possession of the house in dispute,*"

and Sultan said :—

"Twenty years ago, I heard from the plaintiff's father that the said mosque belonged to him. *I do not know anything about possession.*"

Mr. Robert Simson, in his judgment dated 14th November 1855, discussed the case at some length and ordered :—

"As in this case a number of orders have been passed and plaintiff's suit has been dismissed, I cannot pass any other order in this case.. .... moreover the plaintiff's suit was dismissed even by the Settlement Department. It is, therefore, ordered that the plaintiff's suit be dismissed and record of the case consigned to the record room."

This was the last case of Nur Ahmad.

Bhai Jiwan Singh, the grand old mahant of the Shahidganj, died in 1858, a few months after the great Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, having lived through and seen the rise and fall of the Sikh Empire. He had been a priest of the shrines for eighty five years, having come into the office at the death of his father Bhai Jagga Singh in 1773, during the time of Sardar Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, seven and a half years before the birth of the Maharaja. He had seen the occupation of Lahore by the Bhangi Sardars in 1764; he saw the rise of Sardar Mahan Singh and his son Ranjit Singh as chiefs of the Sukarchakia *Misal*; he was an eye-witness to the occupation of Lahore by Sardar Ranjit Singh in 1799 and his coronation as the Maharaja of Lahore in 1801. He was a recipient of valuable gifts from the Maharaja on the occasion of his victories and conquests, and of grants of *muafis* and Jagirs for the Gurdwara. The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in June 1839, the tragic end of his son Maharaja Kharak Singh and grandson Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh in November 1840, the murder of Maharaja Sher Singh in September 1845, the deposition of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last son and successor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in March 1849, and the annexation of the Punjab to the British India dominions, all came to

pass before his eyes.

§ THE CASE OF 1883

The time of Bhai Ganda Singh, who succeeded his father Jiwan Singh in 1838, was comparatively uneventful except for the last days when in April 1883, one Mehar Shah, Imam of mosque at the Taxali Gate Lahore, submitted a petition that the so-called mosque of the Shahidganj should be made over to Muhammadans. His Honour forwarded the petition to the Commissioner of Lahore Division, who, in turn, sent it to the Deputy Commissioner Lahore, for disposal. Sayyed Alam Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner Lahore, was deputed to report as to the circumstances of the building. Accordingly, Bhai Ganda Singh was summoned, but as he was ill, he could not attend. Ganda Singh died on the 19th June 1883, and Bhai Asa Singh, his son, succeeded him as *Gaddi-nishin Muafidar Mahant* of the Shahidganj Gurdwaras.

Bhai Asa Singh pleaded as under :—

"The said mosque has been in our possession for a long period and there are the Samadhs of our Gurus in the compound. We open the *Granth Sahib*. It remains in our possession. Previous suits were brought by the Muhammadans in respect of the said mosque and it

was decided. The records of the said cases are forthcoming in the Court."

§ *SAYYED ALAM SHAH'S REPORT*

On the 10th July 1883, Sayyed Alam Shah went to the spot and examined the whole building. As the external shape of the building had not been changed when it was turned into a Sikh *Dharamsala* or a Gurdwara at the time of its occupation by the Bhangi Sardars in 1764, the outer aspect remained as it was and appeared to be that of a mosque, but the inside of it was purely Sikh in every respect. Sayyed Alam Shah submitted his Report on the 11th July, 1883, as follows :—

"I myself went to the spot yesterday, the 10th July 1883. The whole of the house was inspected. An old mosque of the time of Muslim Kings is still existing in the compound towards the west. The aspect of the building in question still appears to be that of Mohammadan but inside in one portion thereof, a *Langar* (charitable kitchen) is built, and ***in the second portion of it the Dharamsala of the Sikhs is built, wherein it has been learnt from Asa Singh that Granth Sahib is opened and recited.*** In the third portion a *Kotha* is built wherein chaff is lying. Besides, many other

Sikh buildings are built in the compound. If it be seen from the inner side it appears that the mosque and other buildings adjoin one another. Besides the mosque the following *Samadhs* of the Sikhs are still in existence :—

1. *Samadh* of Bhai Jiwan Singh who was the grandfather of Asa Singh.
2. *Samadh* of Bhai Sain Das who was the Guru of Jiwan Singh.
3. *Samadh* of Kahan Singh, the Pujari whereof is Budh Singh.
4. *Samadh* of Bhai Sahib Singh, the Pujari whereof, Bhagat Singh, is alive.

As regards the said house it is known in the city that the mosque, the hamam, the baghicha (orchard), etc., were built by Nawab Mir Mannu Khan, Subedar of Lahore. Under the order of his officer *Mir Mannu Khan had been deputed for the destruction of the Sikhs*, and, as in those days Sikhism had just come into being, he had issued an order that *any Sikh who was found should be beheaded and his head kept near the said mosque and that when heads were collected he used to get them buried.* When the Muhammadan rule was over, the Sikhs became the owners of the

country. They overpowered Nawab Mir Mannu Khan as well. Moreover they made the mosque, hamam, etc., desolate. As in the Sikh community Akalis were orthodox in their religion, they took possossion of the mosque, *turned it into a Dharamsala and named it SHAHIDGANJ, as the Sikhs according to their religious faith regard those people, whose heads were cut off and buried as martyrs. For the said very reason they gave it the name of SHAHIDGANJ.*"

The above report of Sayyed Alam Shah, Extra Assistant Commissioner Lahore, established the following points :—

1. that the alleged mosque, etc., were built by Nawab Mir Mannu ;
2. that Mir Mannu had ordered an indiscriminate slaughter of the Sikhs;
3. that the heads of the executed Sikhs were kept and collected near the so-called mosque and buried, that is, the precincts of the so-called mosque had been used as a place of execution of the Sikhs and a storehouse for their executed heads ;
4. that the Sikhs, according to their religious faith, regard those people, whose heads were cut off and buried, as martyrs or

Shahids;

5. that when the Sikhs occupied the so-called mosque, they turned it into a *Dharamsala*, or a place of Sikh religious worship, and gave it the name of *Shahidganj*, or the Place of Martyrs, for the said very reason;
6. that *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs, was installed and recited there ;
7. that *Langar* or charitable kitchen of the Sikhs was run in one portion of it;
8. that many other Sikh buildings were built in the compound ;
9. that there were, adjoining the mosque-shaped building, *Samadhs* or mausoleums of Bhai Jiwan Singh, Kahan Singh, Sain Das and Sahib Singh, and
10. that, although from outside it appeared like a mosque, from inside it was purely a Sikh Gurdwara in shape and use.

The Deputy Commissioner Lahore, in his judgment of the case acknowledged the right of the Sikhs the mosque-shaped building and dismissed the claim of Imam Mehar Shah.

§ *JUDGMENT OF LALA AMOLAK RAM*

It may at this stage be mentioned that Bhai Ganda Singh had made certain additions, in the form

of houses, shops and stable to the Shahidganj property and, in his will of 1879, made certain assignments in favour of his wife Khem Kaur and other relatives. After the death of Bhai Ganda Singh in June 1883, his widow Khem Kaur presented a plaint on the 15th May 1885, in the Court of Lala Amolak Ram, Munsif, Lahore against Bhai Asa Singh son of Bhai Ganda Singh, Mahant of the Shahidganj, claiming " Rs. 250/- on account of a share in the income of Shahidganj." While rejecting the claim of the widow of the previous Mahant to a division of the income of the shrine, the learned Munsif held :—

> "After a careful consideration of the whole case, I am clearly of opinion that the whole of the property attached to the Shahid Bunga, inclusive of the mosque, mill, shop and stable, is of the nature of an endowed property belonging to a religious institution. ... Ganda Singh was simply a manager or trustee, and any additions made to the estate by means of the income derived therefrom belong to the shrine and no one else."

§ *THE TIME OF BHAI HARNAM SINGH*

Bhai Asa Singh died in 1895. Bhai Harnam Singh succeeded him as the Mahant of the Shahidganj, and the property attached to the Gurdwara was divided

in equal shares between Harnam Singh and Hari Singh. As we know, there has always been a muafi or assignment of land held by the Mahants. On the death of Asa Singh the Muafi was orginally mutated in the name of the two sons, but subsequently at the request of the two brothers, it was entered as owned by the Gurdwara Shahidganj, managed by Bhai Harnam Singh, the Mahant.

From the time of Bhai Ganda Singh and Asa Singh the property attached to the Gurdwara had gradually begun to be built over and a greater portion of it was alienated upto the beginning of the Gurdwara Reform Movement in 1921. Not only this. The attention orginally paid to and the interest taken in the Shahidganj Dharamsala—the so-called mosque—was gradually transferred to Shahidganj of Bhai Taru Singh, which, later on, became the central place of religious worship. The underlying object was to convert the property of the Shahidganj into the personal property of the custodians. They disposed it off at their will and pleasure, and the fifteen bighas of land gifted by the Bhangi Sardars in 1764, for the upkeep and maintenance of the Shahidganj, was reduced by sales and transfers to about half a bigha upto the time of Bhai Harnam Singh. The Shahidganj Dharamsala in the so-called mosque fell out of use and the historical importance of the

building, which in fact was the real SHAHID-GANJ, was lost in oblivion. The Shahidganj Singhanian, however, retained some interest and importance owing to the small monument, raised by the Sri Guru Singh Sabha of Lahore, in the form of a single-room Gurdwara over the historic dungeon.

CHAPTER V

History from 1850 to 1935 (contd.)

§ DECISIONS OF THE GURDWARA TRIBUNAL AND THE PUNJAB HIGH COURT

The Gurdwara Reform Movement, which aimed at purifying the Sikh temples of all un-Sikh-like deviations and practices and at protecting their endowed properties from the misappropriation of their self-aggrandising custodians, resulted in the passage of the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925, which placed all the Sikh historical Gurdwaras under the management of a Sikh Central Board, called the Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, with branches all over the province. The Act declared the Shahidganj, a scheduled Sikh Gurdwara as per Punjab Government Notification No. 892-G of 28th April 1926, and gave it for management to the Local Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee of Lahore, and a consolidated list of the properties belonging to the Gurdwara was published with the Punjab Government Notification No. 275-G of 22nd December 1927, in the manner required by Section 3, Sub-section (2) of the Act.

The old Mahant Bhai Harnam Singh, as we

know, had converted the endowed property of the Shahidganj, and certain additions thereto, into his personal property. In suit No. 651 of 1885, Khem Kaur widow of Ganda Singh *versus* Asa Singh son of Ganda Singh, in the court of Lala Amolak Ram Munsif Lahore, the learned judge, as previously mentioned, had ordered :--

"After a careful consideration of the whole case, I am clearly of opinion that the whole of the property attached to Shahid Bunga inclusive of the mosque, mill, shops and stable, is of the nature of an endowed property belonging to a religious institution. No doubt a few shops and the stable had been built during the incumbency of Ganda Singh, but the site had admittedly belonged to the shrine, the materials too had come from buildings or ruins belonging to the shrine, and Ganda Singh's sole income consisted of the presents made at the shrine or of the rents of lands endowed therefor. Ganda Singh was simply a manager or trustee, and any additions made to the estate by means of the income derived therefrom belongs to the shrine and no one else." *

* An extract from this judgment has already been quoted on page 55. It is repeated here for the sake of clarity.

But Bhai Harnam Singh would not willingly transfer the property attached to the Shahidganj to the Committee, and protracted litigation ensued between the parties in the first Sikh Gurdwara Tribunal at Lahore.

The Anjuman-i-Islamia, a Muslim Association of Lahore, also now found an opportunity to rake up the old question and filed a petition in the Tribunal, through Chaudhri Abdual Ghani, Advocate, claiming properties Nos. 16, 17, 23, 23/1, 23/2, 24/2, 25, 26, and 27 of the consolidated list, comprising the so-called mosque—the Shahidganj *Dharamsala*—and a few shops belonging to the Gurdwara. The same property was also claimed by Bhai Harnam Singh, the old Mahant, and his brother Giani Hari Singh of Khalsa Collegiate School Amritsar, as their personal property.

Sayyed Muhsin Shah, Advocate High Court, Joint Secretary Anjuman-i-Islamia, appeared before the Tribunal to present the claim of the Anjuman upon the building, without any documentary evidence, not even knowing who was its original founder and when it was built, but simply because it was shaped like a mosque. The learned President of the Tribunal, Mr. Justice Hilton, dismissed the petition of the Anjuman-i-Islamia, No. 1282, and wrote in his judgment:—

"The learned council for the petitioners based his argument before us on the claim that the mosque having been built as a mosque by Mir Mannu in about 1750 must always remain a mosque and that property once dedicated to *wakf* can never be lost by adverse possession. He *did not*, however, *cite before us any authority to support his proposition*, and in my judgment there is not sufficient ground upon which we can depart from the view which was taken in the suits of 1852 and 1855 and 1883, which are relevant under section 42 of the Act. It is clear from the documents O/23 and O/19, to which reference has been frequently made in the judgment, that Ganda Singh and Asa Singh were in possession of this mosque and were receiving the rent which accrued from it and that *they regarded it as a part of the Gurdwara property. In my judgment the claim of the Anjuman-i-Islamia has no valid foundation and the mere fact that the building is shaped as a mosque does not justify us in granting them a decree.* I would therefore dismiss petition No. 1282."

Rai Bahadur Munna Lal, the second judge of the Tribunal, also agreed with and endorsed the judgment of the President, dismissing the claim of the Anju-

man-i-Islamia, in the following words :—

"As regards case No. 1282 by the Anjuman-i-Islamia, I am of opinion that they have been evidently flogging a dead horse. *The mosque has since long ceased to serve as a sacred place.* Its conversion to private use was *established since before 1852* and has been abundantly proved by the evidence of Gian Singh (P. W. 15). The existance of Samadhs in the compound of the mosque is an additional eloquent fact against the Anjuman. This was a triangular contest. The onus lay upon the petitioners. Both the objectors and the Anjuman have failed to discharge it."

Similarly the petition of Nizam Din and Feroz Din, claiming a small area of the grave together with a right of way from the southern road to this grave, was dismissed by Mr. Justice Hilton and was endorsed by Rai Bahadur Munna Lal, the second judge of the Tribunal.

The petition of the old Mahant, Bhai Harnam Singh and his brother Giani Hari Singh, claiming the property attached to the Shahidganj as their personal property, was also dismissed on the 20th January 1930, and the learned President of the Gurdwara Tribunal wrote in his judgment :—

"On the basis of these documents, I therefore

hold on the first issue that all the properties in dispute in all these petitions (with the exception of certain property in dispute, petitions 1317 and 1278, to be dealt with later) belonged orginally to the notified Gurdwara and that Hari Singh and Harnam Singh do not own them, nor have ever owned them, in their private capacity. It follows from this finding that the petition of Harnam Singh and Hari Singh should fail on this main point....I would hold, therefore, that their petition is liable to dismissal in toto."

Harnam Singh, and Hari Singh, however, filed an appeal from this decree of the Tribunal in the High Court of Judicature at Lahore. Mr. Justice M. M. L. Currie and Mr. Justice J. H. Monroe dismissed the appeal on the 19th October 1934, and maintained the decision of the Gurdwara Tribunal, and ordered:—

"It is clear that the *actual area described as Shahidganj in 1868, comprised the mosque* and the adjacent land, and that the present Gurdwara is what was described as Mandir, lying to the north of the road. There can be no doubt that *originally the whole area, north and south of the road, was one plot, the hammam being attached to the mosque.*

It is, in my opinion, clear from these admis-

sions, coupled with the history of the place, that the property in dispute was orginally attached to the institution Shahidganj and that it was held by the petitioners and their predecessors-in-interest as managers of that institution. It is almost certain that it was granted to them by the Bhangi Sardars when they ousted the Muhammandans from power in Lahore, and subsequently continued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The petition was therefore, rightly dismissed.

As regards the question of compensation no argument has been addressed to us on this point, and it is clear that any improvements effected have been effected from the income of the institution and from the proceeds of the alienation, from time to time, of various plots attached to it. The Tribunal was, therefore, right in refusing to grant any compensation.

I would, therefore, dismiss the appeal with costs."

A small technical difficulty in the handing and taking over of the possession was overcome by a mutual compromise between the parties and, thus, all the property attached to the Shahidganj compromising the so-called Mosque—named the Shahid-

ganj Dharamsala—the Khanqah, a few shops, etc., passed into the possession of the Local Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee Lahore, with Jathedar Tara Singh of Thethar as its President, in March 1935.

CHAPTER VI

The Muslim Agitation of 1935

Improvements decided upon by the Committee

With the transfer of the possession of the Shahidganj into their hands in March 1935, the Local Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee Lahore took in hand the improvement of this 'Shrine of Sikh Martyrs.' It was really a matter of great pain to every Sikh visitor that a Sikh monument of so great an historical importance should have been in a neglected condition. The building of the Shahidganj *Dharamsala* or Gurdwara —the so-called mosque—being about one hundred and eighty five years old, had worn down with age, and was in a tottering condition. The other buildings in the precincts were in a still worse condition. As the Gurdwara Reform Movement itself aimed at the improvement and better management of Sikh temples and at purifying them of un-Sikh-like deviations and non-Sikh usages, the Committee decided to clear the site of all old and dilapidated buildings and the rubbish and debris that had been collecting there for long, for a new and better building.

With this object in view, the clearance began on May 30, 1935. The northern bazaar wall and the southern roadside wall were built in the first three days, and a small door connecting the *Samadhs* (since demolished for the clearance of the site) and Gurdwara Shahidganj Singhanian was erected on the 3rd June. Most of the general clearance of the compound was finished by the evening of the 7th. The demolition of the dilapidated buildings in the precincts, including the Shahidganj *Dharamsala*—the so-called mosque—began on June 8. The work of demolition had been carried on for twenty days and all the buildings and the northern portion of the alleged mosque had been levelled with the ground, without the least of excitement, when all of a sudden, on Saturday the 29th June 1935, a large crowd of local Muhammadans, armed with sticks and hatchets, collected near the Shahidganj to attack the Sikhs in their temple and to take forcible possession of the building.

Beginning of clearance

During the previous week, a rumour had been set afloat that the Sikhs had demolished some Muslim tomb in the Gurdwara property, but this had proved to be wrong and the Muslim agitation had subsided.

On the 28th June, a Sikh mason, Mela Singh by name, working on the northern portion of the

dilapidated building, was accidently buried under the falling debris and died at about 6-15 p. m. As the news spread, the Muslims broadcasted the death of Mela Singh as a miracle of Allah and an indication of His wrath against the Sikhs, and infalmed the feelings of their co-religionists with fire-breathing speeches and exciting slogans, urging them to march upon the Shahidganj Gurdwara.

Death of Mela Singh

Throughout the afternoon of the following day, the 29th June 1935, parties of Muslims collected outside the Gurdwara, raising cries of 'Allah-u-Akbar' and other communal slogans, and at one time attempted to rush upon the northern gate to enter the precincts, but the Gurdwara was successfully defended by a few Sikhs present there. Fearing a communal riot and disturbance of peace, caused by this attitude of the Muslims, Mr. S. Partab, Deputy Commissioner Lahore, desired the Sikhs "to cease demolition of the mosque pending examination of relevant papers concerning the Gurdwara and the mosque," and the Sikhs, with remarkable patience, obeyed the order of the Deputy Commissioner to the very letter and discontinued their work.

Beginning of Muslim agitation

But, " in spite of all precautions taken by the authorities, by 10-30 p. m. on Saturday [the 29th], nearly 2,000 Muslims had collected outside the Gurdwara and cries of 'Allah-u-Akbar' were raised... The situation was threatening when the City Magistrate was informed by telephone. The Deputy Commissioner, the City Magistrate, the Senior Superintendent of Police and an Assistant Superintendent of Police, accompanied by a strong contingent of police arrived on the scene. ... On Sunday [the 30th June, 1935] police precautions were continued in the city...At the Gurdwara the Muslims continued to collect but only in small numbers. However by the evening the crowd swelled and at 7 p. m. the City Magistrate had again to be called." [*C. & M. Gazette*, Lahore, Tuesday, July 2, 1935]

Tuesday, the 2nd, was marked by some stray assaults by Muslims on Sikhs* and the Deputy Commissioner was constrained to issue an order that "any attempt at rowdyism or hooliganism will

*The writer himself was present in the Shahidganj Gurdwara on the afternoon of July 2nd, when he was informed by S. Avtar Singh, B. A., LL. B., son of the late B. Ram Rakha Singh of Amritsar, that he and another companion of his and the Sikh driver of the lorry in which they were travelling, had been assaulted by a Muslim crowd when their lorry coming from Amritsar was passing by the Gujranwala Lorry Stand. S. Avtar Singh had been wounded in his right hand.

be promptly and effectively suppressed." But this was of no avail. "At about 10-30 p. m., some 200 Muslims, carrying spades, appeared near the Gurdwara. They were marching in military formation and were accompanied by a crowd of nearly 3,000 Muslims." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 3, 1935.]

Deputy Commissioner's warnings of no avail

The Deputy Commissioner made every effort to create a calm atmosphere, but the situation remained unchanged on Wednesday the 3rd. "From time to time parties of Muslims—mostly irresponsible youths—marched shouting 'Allah-u-Akbar' in various parts of the city, particularly in the vicinity of the Gurdwara. ... On the other hand nearly 3,000 Akalis from outside had arrived in Lahore by Wednesday noon for the purpose of defending Sikh rights against a show of force." [*C. & M. G.* July 4, 1935.]

Seriousness of situation

Finding that there was no prospect of better counsels prevailing with the Muslims, a warning was issued by the City Magistrate to the Muslim leaders saying that "use of force has so far been avoided in the hope that better counsels would prevail and that responsible persons would use their influence to keep others in check, but the matters have not improved. ...if responsible sections feel helpless in the matter, the District

Magistrate would be constrained to permit the use of force."* The Muslims defied these orders in the evening of the 3rd, when the authorities had to declare the Muslim crowds, marching towards the Sikh temple, unlawful assemblies and had to disperse them by baton charges.

The 4th passed in comparative peace, but "the situation created by the Muslim-Sikh tension in Lahore took a serious turn on Sunday afternoon [the 5th July, 1935], when a crowd of Muslims estimated at 3,000, armed with lathis and bricks, marched towards the Shahidganj Gurdwara from the Badshahi Mosque after 'Juma' prayers. The crowd was assuming a very violent and lawless attitude, and the police had to disperse it with a lathi charge. "When the police made their charge, members of the crowd retaliated, throwing stones at the police and even using lathis against them. A Head-Constable was seriously injured and was profusely bleeding when he was removed to the City Kotwali. He is stated to have been struck several times by lathis and stones. The City Inspector, Mirza Muhammad Baqir, was hit with a stone in the chest. A Sub-Inspector and

Lawlessness of the Muslims

*C. & M. Gazette, July 4, 1935.

several constables were also hit." [*Civil & Military Gazette*, July 6, 1935.]

The following cases of assaults made by Muslims on Sikhs were reported on the 4th and 5th July :—

Assaults by Muslims

(1) "Ram Singh son of Sultani Ram, Khatri of Rahon, has reported at the Naulakha Police Station that on the evening of the 4th July, 1935, he met six Muhamadans at the Railway Chowk, one of whom came up to him and stabbed him on the left wrist causing him to fall unconscious. .. "

(2) "At about 4-30 p.m. on the 5th instant, Dhanna Singh son of Ishar Singh of Mughalpura and three other peons of Lahore Electric Supply Company (Purbias by caste) were crossing the Bull Road— Fleming Road cross-roads when some unknown Muhammedan dressed in khaki shirt and shorts struck Dhanna Singh from behind with a stick. The accused then ran away. ..."

[*Police Intelligence Report*, dated July 6, 1935, issued by the C.I.D. Punjab : *C. & M. Gazette*, July 7, 1935.]

With the increasing danger, a number of Sikhs from outside poured into Lahore to defend their Gurdwara, and in the words of Mr. D. J.

Boyd in reply to Pir Akbar Ali's question in the Punjab Legislative Council on 4th November, 1935 :

Ingress of Sikhs into Lahore

"The ingress of Sikhs into Lahore was a direct result of Muslim demonstrations outside the Shahidganj Gurdwara....Up to July 4, the number of outside Sikhs increased as Muslim demonstrations increased in size and violence. ...As regards the ingress of Sikhs into Lahore, the local Sikh leaders were advised to stop it. They took some action accordingly, but the position was made more difficult by continued Muslim demonstrations and exaggerated accounts of these demonstrations in the Muslim press. For instance, the *Zamindar* published in large headlines that on July 5, 100,000 Muslims demonstrated outside Shahidganj" and that the Gurdwara was besieged by them. [*Civil & Military Gazette*, November 5, 1935, p. 8, column 5.]

In view of the seriousness of the situation and imminence of danger to the peace of the province by this lawlessness of the Muslim agitators, His Excellency Sir Herbert Emerson, Governor of the Punjab, had to come down from Simla, arriving at Lahore on Saturday, the 6th July. His Excellency received the deputations of both

the Muslims and the Sikhs but, unfortunately, his efforts at an amicable settlement met with a failure.

"His Excellency explained to them [members of the Muslim deputation on Saturday, July 6] that the Punjab Government had carefully examined the legal aspect of the case and were bound by the decisions of the Civil Courts. These had been consistently in favour of the Sikhs and in particular the Gurdwara Tribunal had rejected the claim of the Anjuman-i-Islamia in connection with the mosque. It was clearly not possible for the executive Government to go behind those decisions. They had also considered action under Criminal Law, but had reached the conclusion that this also was not possible." [*Vide* Press Communique issued by the Punjab Government, dated July 10th, 1935, published in the *C. & M. Gazette*, July 11, 1935.]

The Governor explains position

But the Muslims would not abide by the decisions of the Courts of Justice and the Sikhs could not relinquish their legal rights, as recognised by the Law Courts, over the building which they claimed to be sacred to the memory of their Martyrs.

The "relevent papers" had been examined in the meantime by the Government, and the Sikhs quietly decided on Sunday night to continue the work of demolition, which began in the early

hours of Monday, the 8th July. "The authorities received the information regarding the demolition soon after it had started and were confornted with the necessity of a prompt decision regarding their line of action. They decided that it was not possible to prevent the Sikhs from exercising their legal rights and that bloodshed should be avoided by preventing Muslims from approaching the scene of demolition." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 9, 1935.]

Sikhs continue their work

The position and attitude of the Government is further explained in the telegram of the Punjab Government dated 9th July, 1935, to all Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners throughout the Province that "they had also considered action under the criminal law but had reached the conclusion that this also was not possible." The relevent portion of the telegram runs as follows:—

Section 295 I. P. C. not applicable

"As regards the legal position, the Government were definitely advised that Section 295 I. P. C. was not applicable and this opinion has been now confirmed by the law officers of the Government of India." [*C. &. M. Gazette*, July 10, 1935.]

The question of preserving the so-called Shahid-

ganj mosque under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act was also considered, but in the words Mr. Boyd in reply to a question in the Punjab Legislative Council, on November 11, 1935:

"This expedient was considered and rejected as impracticable in the circumstances." [The *Tribune*, November 12, 1935.]

To prevent Muslim crowds marching towards the Sikh temple and creating unpleasant situation, "cordons of British troops and the police were placed on theroads leading to Shahidganj Gurdwara and traffic along these roads completely stopped."

The Muslim excitement now manifested itself in stray assults. A Sikh, named Ganda Singh, was attacked from behind by a Muslim Muhammad Rafiq by name and was brutally done to death at about 10-20 a. m. outside the Mochi Gate, near the Thandi Khuhi on the Circular Road. Another attack by a Muslim assailant Muhammad Ishaq was made on a Sikh constable Harnam Singh of the Railway Police at 1 p. m. while on duty at Akbari Gate. Two more stabbing cases were reported on the same evening, July 8, one proving fatal. A Sikh electrician named Sadhu

Murderous assaults by Muslims

Singh was stabbed on Fleming Road, and he died at 11 p. m in the Hospital. "The other stabbing case occurred near the Railway station and here too a Sikh was the vicitim." "Two Hindus also complained of having been assaulted near Mochi Gate. Their injuries were minor." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 9, 1935 ; and *Bulletin* issued by the Punjab C. I. D., at 5 p. m. on July 8.]

Curfew Order

•"The Deputy Commissioner proclaimed by beat of drum in the City that any one seen committing a murderous assault or arson was liable to be shot dead. Later a Curfew Order was proclaimed under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code."

Warning to the editors of *Siyasat* and the *Zamindar*

Finding that the Muslim Press was mostly responsible for this lawless state of affairs, "the Deputy Commissioner called Sayed Habib of the *Siyasat*, Maulana Zafar Ali and his son Maulana Akhtar Ali of the *Zamindar* to the City Kotwali and warned them against any attempt to instigate Muslims against Sikhs." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 9, 1935.]

The Government stood for the protection of its law and of peace and order in the country, and the *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, in its editorial of

C. & M. Gazette's warning

July 9, warned the Muslims "that Muslims gain nothing and stand to lose much by allowing passion to get the upper hand...The law was on the side of the Sikhs, and Muslims will not improve their position by challenging the law with brute force. The Government cannot override the law, or arbitrarily set aside findings of a competent Court. ... As soon as the Sikhs declared their intention of enforcing what has legally been accepted as their right, there was no alternative left for the Government but to uphold law. Nor is any alternative left for Muslims but to bow to the authority of the law. ..."

Situation improves

"Thanks to the enforcement of Curfew Order, Monday [8th July]'s happenings in Lahore were followed by an eventless night and the Muslim excitement in the city had time to subside,"† and Tuesday the 9th passed without any serious incident. As usual the Government continued its efforts to bring the city to normal condition and the situation remained calm and peaceful on Wednesday the 10th. "It was not, however, yet considered safe to relax any of the special measures which enabled the authorities two days ago to bring a serious situation

* *C. & M. Gazette*, July 10, 1935.

under control."*

"The situation showed signs of improvement on the 11th, and, according to a communique, the Shromani Akali Dal issued telephonic instructions last night [of the 11th] to various places to stop Akali Jathas from coming to Lahore. The Akali Jathas in Lahore are being sent back." [The *Tribune*, July 13, 1935, the *C. & M. Gazette*, July 12, 1935.]

Friday the 12th also passed in peace, and in view of the easier situation, the Government considered it safe on Saturday the 13th to reduce by about one half the number of the troops stationed in the city.

Gift of Shah Chiragh mosque to Muslims

To placate the agitating Muslims and to dissuade them from their lawless behaviour, a Press Communique was issued on the 13th and published on the 14th that "the Punjab Government has decided to hand the Shah Chirag mosque [a large and very commodious building worth several lakhs, bought by the Government in 1860 from a person who was using it as a private residence, and now used as Sessions Court,] to the Muslim community through the Anjuman-i-Islamia, with as little delay as possible."

* *C. & M. Gazette*, July 11, 1935.

But the Muslims were not to be easily pleased. They mistook the generosity of the Government for weakness. The Government was disillusioned the same evening to find that in a meeting of about 10,000 persons, with 1000 blue shirts, where the chairman thanked the Government for this decision of handing over the Shah Chiragh mosque to the Muslim community, "other speakers, however, expressed the view that the Government action, 'considerate and generous as it was, could not deflect Muslims from their demand for the site of the demolished Shahidganj mosque. People were asked to enrol themselves as volunteers under the Council of Action,"* the immediate programme of which was "to recurit volunteers—and dress them in blue shirts—for the purpose of carrying on agitation."

Muslim attitude changed for worse

Owing to the "intemperate speeches" of the Muslim leaders, on the same day of promising the gift of the Shah Chiragh mosque, and "other activities of a group of persons who are deliberately trying to creat mischief,* "an official order banning the discussion of the Shahidganj mosque dispute at public meetings in Lahore, a decision to deport

Ban on meetings

*C. & M. Gazette, July 16, 1935.

four Muslim leaders from the town and an order continuing the censorship of the Press for another week were among the week-end developments in the situation."* On the third day, the 16th July, the unlawful processions of the Muslims had to be dispersed with lathi charge, and, on the seventh day, the 21st July, the Government was driven to the painful necessity of opening fire on the Muslim rioters of Lahore to keep them under "restraint," which, unfortunately—perhaps under some misapprehension—it happened to appreciate on July 13, when it promised to restore the Shah Chiragh mosque to the Muslim community.

Externments

A Press Communique, issued by the Director of Information Bureau of the Government of the Punjab on the 15th July 1935, stated :—

" A Muslim meeting was held yesterday at Lahore attended by about 12,000 persons at which plans were announced for carrying on agitation with regard to the demolition of the Shahidganj mosque. Some of the speeches were very intemperate and contained deliberate repetition of false statements, which the speakers knew to be false, regarding the

*C. & M. Gazette, July 16, 1935

action of the Government. In consequence of this meeting and the other activities of a group of persons, who are deliberately trying to create mischief, the Punjab Government has externed from Lahore and confined to certain places the following persons :—

(1) Maulana Zafar Ali.
(2) Sayyed Muhammad Habib.
(3) Mr. Feroz-ud-Din Ahmad.
4) Malik Lal Khan."

Ban on processions

And on the 16th, it appeared to the District Magistrate that the agitation of the Muslims was "likely to cause a breach of peace, and that immediate prevention or speedy remedy is necessary." He was, therefore, constrained to "strictly warn and enjoin the public not to take any part in such processions, within the limits of the Lahore District for a period of one month with effect from today the 16th July 1935." [*Civil & Military Gazette*, July 17, 1935.]

His Excellency Sir Herbert Emerson, Governor of the Punjab, made a pathetic appeal for "a settlement, honourable to all, of this deplorable affair" at a conferance of members of the Legislative Council held in Lahore on Wednesday, the 17th July 1935, to discuss the situation,

and referred to the "deliberate dissemination of false statements by unscrupulous persons." He catagorically refuted certain accusations levelled by Muslims against the Government, especially those ascribing to Government "a breach of faith." Currency had been given by the Muslim Press to a false statement that the Deputy Commissioner and the Governor had held out an assurance to the Muslim deputation that the so-called mosque would not be demolished in any circumstances. Referring to this, His Excellency said :—

False statements refuted by Governor

"I, therefore, wish to make it clear in most unqualified terms, first that the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore (who throughout this crisis has shown great efficiency, tact and devotion to duty) did not give a promise that the building would not be demolished in any circumstances. He promised that he would prevent this until the Punjab Government had had time to examine the legal position. He carried out this promise.

Second, I wish again to make it absolutely clear that neither the Punjab Government nor I myself made any such promise when we met the Muslim deputation on the 6th and 7th of July.

We had previously most carefully considered

what action was possible in the legal circumstances of the case, and we had reached the conclusion that it would be only raising false hopes to give any assurance of the kind now attributed to us. We left the deputation in no doubt on that point." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 18, 1935.]

The non-official members of the Council also issued an appeal on the afternoon of the 17th, to restore 'harmony and good will.'

But all efforts failed to produce any effect. "A Muslim meeting was again held in the Badshahi mosque on Wednesday [the 17th] afternoon to defy the orders of the District Magistrate banning meetings and processions. The meeting started at 5 p. m. after prayers and lasted for an hour and a half. It was attanded by about 1,000 Muslims."

Muslims defy orders

After the meeting as the crowd came out "some members of the crowd also threw stones on the police, but none is reported to have been hurt. ... Small parties of 100 or 200 men, however, marched off towards the city. Inside the city these small processions of the Muslims had to be dispersed by the Police who made lathi charges at two places—one in Bazaz Hatta and the other outside Delhi Gate." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 18, 1935.]

On Thursday the 18th, the situation was well in hand, but the Friday of the 19th July brought with it its usual dread. According to the Press Communique issued on that day by the Director of Information Bureau, Punjab Government :—

Lathi charges become necessary

"At Friday prayers to-day at the Badshahi Mosque some inflammatory speeches were made and while the main congregation dispersed quietly to their homes a procession was formed in defiance of orders by an irresponsible element with the object of marching through the city to the Shahidganj Gurdwara. The Police made 36 arrests and the prisoners were successfully despatched to the jail. When the police attempted to make other arrests, a hostile crowd gathered and police were unable to effect their purpose. For some time the police were hemmed in a hostile crowd and reserves had to be used to extricate them. Three mild lathi charges were made, but as the people in the procession lay on the ground the police abstained from the use of further force. The situation at 10 p. m. was that the processionists were all insistent on their original intention of marching through the city to the

Shahidganj Gurdwara but were being prevented by the Police from carrying out their purpose. The crowd did considerable damage to some police vans .."

In view of the seriousness of the situation, the District Magistrate had to issue a new Curfew Order and to extend the Curfew hours ordering that 'no person within the limits of the Lahore Municipal Committee shall remain outdoor after 8-30 p. m. and before 5-30 a. m. till further notice.'

Curfew hours extended

But despite all orders of the District Magistrate and "all efforts of the police, the Muslim crowd which [had] assemled on Friday afternoon failed to disperse during the night or on Saturday [the 20th July] when its number was considerably swelled." According to the official Communique of July 20, issued by the Director of Information Bureau, Punjab Government:

"From about 7 a. m. a hostile crowd gathered in front of the Kotwali with the intention of going to Shahidganj Gurdwara. The crowd was from the beginning violent and *tried repeatedly to break through the police cordon, throwing bricks and missiles at the police.* The police carried out a number of charges with the object of dispersing the crowd.

Muslim crowd very violent

Mounted police was also used and several cavalry charges were made. Attempts to disperse the crowd continued for nearly two hours, the mob in the meantime *becoming more violent* and a *number of injuries being caused to police and to cavalry.* Apart from minor injuries, eight cases are in hospital. The crowd was *very determined* and *very violent.*

All efforts to disperse having failed, order was given to fire. Six rounds were fired and the crowd then broke. About an hour later the crowd regathered and was *again violent.* It was then necessary to fire again, two rounds only being fired. The number of casualties from the firing is not definitely known, but so far it has not been possible to trace more than three killed. The number of wounded is also not known but is very small."

Firing had to be resorted to

Fire had again to be opened on the violent and hostile Muslim crowd on Sunday afternoon, the 21st, when all other efforts had failed to disperse or to keep it in check, and the Police and troops were pelted with missiles and brickbats. It is not possible to give here full details of the circumstances under which firing had to be resorted to, and they can be had from the official Communique of that day, and from the official narratives by Mr. S. Partab, District Magistrate Lahore, Mr. J. T. M. Bennet, Deputy Inspector-General Police, Investigation Department, Punjab,

Mr. J. P. Morton, Assistant Superintendent Police. Lahore, and Mr. Abdul Hussain Khan, Magistrate 1st Class, Lahore; published in the *Tribune* of Lahore, dated August 26, 1935. Though the situation was under control at night, yet "in view of the possibility of bands of Muslims from outside entering Lahore, the necessary steps have been taken heavily to reinforce the troops and the Police" by drafts from outside the Punjab, said the Government Communique.

Military and Police officers and men wounded

It may be mentioned that as a result of the retaliations of members of the hostile and violent Muslim crowds on the 20th and 21st July 1935, the number of police and troops wounded and "under treatment in Government hospitals or treated at first-aid posts," as given in the Communique of 22nd, was as large as 124, as follows :—

(1)	Military Officers	3
(2)	Police Officers	7
(3)	Other ranks British troops	12
(4)	Other ranks Indian troops	22
(5)	Other ranks Indian police	80
	Total	124

Monday, the 22nd July, passed without any untoward happening, but the situation took a new turn on

Tuesday, the 23rd, "when it was decided at a Muslim meeting in Wazir Khan's mosque to send *jathas* of five persons or more to defy District Magistrate's orders about unlawful assemblies." But this Civil Disobedience and defiance of law could not be continued for more than two days, and practically came to an end on the 25th, when some of the Muslim government officials came to the rescue of their community saying that the "Muslims cannot afford to forfeit the goodwill of the Government."

Civil Disobedience by Muslims

From 26th July the situation improved day by day, and, to all appearances, Lahore settled down to normal conditions by the end of the month. Troops were withdrawn from the camp in the city on the 10th of August 1935.

Much of the later trouble was created by the economic boycott of Hindus and Sikhs by Muslims suggested by Mr. K. L. Gauba in his letter published in the *Civil & Military Gazette* of August 27, 1935. Unfortunately for the province, the Rawalpindi Conference of the Muslims held on the 31st August and 1st September 1935, appointed Pir Jamait Ali Shah as the first Amir-i-Shariat or Dictator of the community, to revive the Shahidganj agitation by Civil Disobedience.

Rawalpindi Conference

Pir Jamait Ali Shah, however, dared not launch Civil Disobedience and diverted his energies to the economic boycott of Hindus and Sikhs, as he appears to have been made to realize that "no Government worth its salt can be cowed down by civil disobedience."

Muslims worked up disturbances on N. W. Frontier of India

Besides, the Muslim agitators of the Punjab worked up a sudden disturbance on the North-Western Frontier of India, which at one time threatened to be of a very serious nature, involving the Government of India in a war on the Hazara border, for which troops had to be sent from down-country. A Government Communique dated Nathiagali, September 11, 1935, regarding the Hazara Border Disturbances, states :—

"This sudden outbreak was not spontaneous. Besides other evidence in the possession of the Government, leaders of the Lashkar have themselves revealed in a letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Hazara, that the unrest was deliberately worked up by interested outside agitators from the Punjab to further their purposes in connection with the communal agitation in British India.

The declared object of the Lashkar was to murder non-Muslims and to desecrate their

religious places."

This view is further supported by the proceedings of a public meeting of Muslims held at Rawalpindi in the Juma mosque on Friday, the 6th September 1935, when a resolution "protesting against the Government's policy of bombing the trans-border tribes [in suppperessing the above disturbances on the North-Western Frontier] was adopted." [The *Tribune*, September 9, 1935.]

The effect of the Rawalpindi Muslim Conference and the activities of Pir Jamait Ali added fuel to the smouldering fire of the Muslim agitation, resulting in intemperate speeches by certain Muslim leaders and inflammatory articles in the Muslim press. The Punjab Government was compelled to place the agitators under restraint and to confiscate the securities of the offending newspapers in the middle of September.

Attitude of Sikhs

The Secretary of the Shromani Akali Dal (of the Sikhs), Amritsar, in his statement of September 11, 1935, "regrets that certain Muslim papers are trying to fan communalism, which might tend to endanger peace of the country. In spite of such provocation, the Shromani Akali Dal has requested the Sikhs to *desist from being driven* into any communal upheaval but should show utmost self-

restraint and self-control. The Shromani Akali Dal, nevertheless, wants to make it clear that under no circumstances will they tolerate any infringement of their inviolable right, and will defend by all possible means every inch of the sacred premises of Gurdwara Shahidganj." [The *Tribune*, September 14, 1935.]

The Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, in particular, appealed to the Sikhs to do nothing on the coming Shahidganj day, "the 20th September, that might in any way tend to disturb the peace of the Province," and the Secretary wrote in his appeal dated 16th September "that the S. G. P. C. deems it necessary to request the Sikhs to make every effort to maintain peace. No counter-demonstrations should be held on that day." [The *Tribune*, September 13, 1935.]

"Shahidganj Day"

On the 20th September the Muslims observed "Shahidganj Day" which greatly helped to excite the feelings of the overzealous fanatics, whose bloodthirstiness occasionally manifested itself in murderous assaults on the lives of law-abiding and peaceful Sikhs.

It was really very unfortunate that, at a time when Muslim agitation was at its highest, not only against the Sikhs but also against the Government,

the Punjab Government decided to exempt swords from the provisions of the Arms Act, and the notification thereof was published in the Punjab Gazette on Friday the 20th September 1935, when the agitators were observing the "Shahidganj Day" throughout the country. [*Civil & Military Gazette*, September 25, 1935.]

Sword exempted from the provisions of the Arms Act

Reports of stray assaults by Muslims, on Sikhs were "received from several villages including Meki Dhok and Adhwal, two important villages in the Attock District. A party of Muslims assaulted two Sikhs (Prem Singh and Bhagwan Singh) in village Meki Dhok, three miles off Kot Bhai Than Singh, resulting in serious injuries to one of them who was removed to the Fatehjang hospital." [The *Tribune*, September 27, 1935.]

Assaults again

It was during these days that the well-known Muslim leader Maulana Shaukat Ali wrote a letter to Master Tara Singh, one of the most influential Sikh leaders, with a view to opening "negotiations with the Sikh leaders regarding the Shahidganj question." Master Tara Singh wrote back to Maulana Shaukat Ali:—

Negotiations for an amicable settlement

Master Tara Singh's reply to Maulana Shaukat Ali

"As far as any question relating to the site of the so-called mosque is concerned, this must be regarded as closed. The so-called mosque and its site mean infinitely more to Sikhs than to Muslims and any Sikh leader who for a moment put this fact out of sight would be traitor to his religion and his community."

Refering to the Muslim agitation in the Punjab, Master Tara Singh said that :—

"It has been wantonly started for political ends. It is not Islam that is speaking. It is the Punjab neo-Muslim fired by crude political ambitions based on communal vanity generated by the Anglo-Muslim alliance which has developed a dangerous type of superiority complex.

The Sikhs will not, therefore, countenance tactics which are being employed against them for their own undoing."

"If you still think that we should meet and that some useful purpose can be served thereby, I shall be at your disposal on October 1,2, & 3." [The *Tribune*, September 30, 1935.]

Maulana Shaukat Ali, Sayyed Murtaza Sahib and Mr. K. L. Gauba, Members of the Legislative assembly, arrived at Amritsar on the morning of October 3, and accompanied by Mir Maqbul Mahmud,

Khwaja Ahmad Sadiq and Shaikh Muhammad Sadiq, M. L. C., met eight Sikh Leaders, including Master Tara Singh, Sardar Dalip Singh Doabia, Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Sardar Kartar Singh, Sardar Harnam Singh and Sardar Partap Singh, at 1. 30 p.m. at the Shahid Sikh Missionary College.

Negotiations

The conversations were held in camera and continued for over five hours. "In the beginning Maulana Shaukat Ali is reported to have said that there had been a mosque on the site of Shahidganj in olden times. The Sikh leaders contended that it was a Gurdwara. Eventually it was pointed out that the discussion could only proceed if it were conducted on the assumption that the site of Shahidganj could not be restored to Muslims." The draft of the statement to be issued after the conversations "was discussed for a long time and many alterations were made" at the suggestion of the Muslims leaders who finally approved of and agreed upon the following statement issued by the Sikh leaders :—

"It has given us genuine pleasure to meet Maulana Shaukat Ali, Sayyed Murtaza Sahib, Mr. K. L. Gauba and other Muslim friends in connection with the Shahidganj affair. Maulana Shaukat Ali has provided an occasion for us to understand and appreciate each other's point of view

and for that we are grateful to him. Though the Sikh community is not prepared to part with the site, *this does not preclude the possibility of further negotiations. This can only be possible if our Muslim brethren create a calm atmosphere.* The prospects at present are discouraging but *representatives of Sikh community would welcome a talk with representatives of Muslim community in changed circumstances.*" [*Civil & Military Gazette*, October 4, 1935.]

No calm atmosphere created

But unfortunately no calm atmosphere was created and there was no change in circumstances. Amir-i-Shariat Pir Jamait Ali Shah, dictator of the Muslim Community, as usual, toured about the country, preaching his doctrine of boycott, exciting the feelings of his people and disseminating the seed of hatred and intolerance with much greater enthusiasm. On October 15, a number of fresh suits were instituted against the Sikhs involving therein almost all important Akali leaders. The exemption of swords from the provisions of the Arms Act further encouraged the agitators who are now literally converted into armed terrorists for peaceful and law-abiding people, and the public confidence in "the safty of life and property in the

British *Raj*" is liable to be rudely shaken by broad-day-light murders in the streets of the capital of the Province.

Two Sikhs attacked and injured

On the 23rd October 1935, one Hassan Muhammad of Haveli Pathranwali, Lahore, accompanied by five other Muslims, came armed with an axe, and attacked a Sikh, named Sant Singh, resident of a village in Lyallpur District, all of a sudden, when he (Sant Singh) was enjoying a musical treat between the Shah-almi and Mochi gates. Sant Singh was given two axe-blows, one on the neck and the other on the chest. Leaving his victim unconscious on the ground, Hassan Muhammad shouted that "*he was out to kill Hindus and Sikhs*" and advanced towards Mochi Gate where he came across another Sikh, Raghbir Singh, of Kapurthala, whom he attacked with the same savagery and inflicted several injuries on him. The assailant then proceeded towards Kucha Moti Panda, inside the city, where he attacked one Bishan Singh, killing him instantaneously. One Hindu, Baldev Raj by name, who happened to be quite close to the scene of the occurrence, chased the murderer but the latter attacked and overpowered his captor with the

Bishan Singh murdered

One Hindu wounded

axe, and tried to escape. He was, however, surrounded and apprehended by several Hindus of the locality when the Police arrived on the scene and arrested the culprit. [*C. & M. G.*, & the *Tribune*, *Oct. 24*, *1935.*]

The crime caused a great deal of horror in the city. The *Tribune*, Lahore, wrote in its editorial of Friday the 26th October, 1935 :—

> "The heinous crime which was perpetrated at Lahore on Wednesday [the 23rd October, 1935], and as a result of which one Sikh was killed and two others seriously injured, and a Hindu who tried to grapple with the assailant was wounded, will cause a thrill of horror and indignation among all humane and law-abiding people of all communities."

Crime repeated

The crime was repeated after a fortnight and another Sikh Mangal Singh of Gageki, Sialkot, was stabbed in the neck by a Muslim, behind the Water Works of the Badami Bagh, Lahore, on Friday, the 8th November, when the Muslims of Lahore were observing the second "Shahidganj Day."

One million volunteers to be enliste

On the afternoon of the 9th, "a joint conference of Muslim leaders and Ulemas was held. ... at the Barkat Ali Muhammadan Hall" Lahore, where "it was decided that ten lakhs of volunteers

should be enlisted in the course of November and December and funds should be collected." [*Tribune*, November 10, 1935.]

"It was resolved that during the current lunar month and the next month of 'Ramzan' the work of enrolling volunteers should be pushed on in order to strengthen the movement, so that the number of enrolment should reach a million by last Friday of the month of Ramzan. During this period a communal fund should also be established." *Civil & Military Gazette*, November 10, 1935.]

In the words of Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer in the *Civil & Military Gazette*, November 24, 1935, "it is clear that the million volunteers are to break the constitution, to violate the law, and illegally to force the Government to surrender. Here then is openly and thoughtlessly a move to resort to shock tactics and desperate methods of political and communal warfare. Those who call for volunteers forget that their opponents among the Sikhs can also organize volunteers. The Government cannot watch a Muslim-Sikh War. ... No Government can.... If the resolution was carried out in action, public life in the Punjab would be reduced to wearisome waste."

What are the real underlying intentions of these "Muslim leaders and Ulemas" in enlisting one million volunteers — the dreadful civil

disobedience, or "a disaster by means of civil war, which some of the intemperate speakers of our community are provoking" as Mian Mohd. Abdullah of Rawalpindi wrote in the *Civil & Military Gazette*, September 19, 1935—are still to be seen.

On the 10th of November 1935, the day following the conference, some Pathans dressed as Akali Sikhs were arrested, from the train for Nanakana Sahib on the birthday of Guru Nanak, for possession of 12 bombs, which, in all probability, they would have thrown on a crowd of several lakhs of Sikh pilgrims on the following day.

Efforts for settlement fail

Efforts for an amicable settlement between the Sikhs and Muslims begun on October 3, could not be renewed as "our Muslim brethren" failed to "create a calm atmosphere." It is very unfortunate that even some of the most responsible Muslim leaders have not made any serious attempt to dissuade their co-religionists from unconstitutional and lawless activities.

In the words of the *Tribune*, Lahore, October 30, 1935, "so far not a single responsible Muslim has condemned even the latest wanton and unprovoked crime, as a result of which one Sikh was killed, and two Sikhs and one Hindu were injured. Maulana Shaukat Ali himself [who

was the leader of the negotiators from the Muslim side] has not condemned it." And, it will not be less interesting to know that the meeting of the 9th November, called by Amir-i-Shariat Pir Jamait Ali Shah, wherein such a dangerous resolution of enrolling one million volunteers and of establishing a communal fund was adopted, was attended by such prominent and responsible Muslim gentlemen as Maulana Shaukat Ali, Nawab Muhammad Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot, M. L. C., Khan Bahadur Haji Rahim Bakhsh, Sayyed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, M.L.A., Mian Abdul Aziz, Barrister of Lahore, Allama Inayat Ali Mashraqi, the founder of the "Khaksar" movement, Sayyed Hamid Riza of Bareilly, Makhdum Sadr-ud-Din Gilani, Dr. Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din, Barrister, and Prof. Abdul Qadir of the Islamia College Lahore.

"The [Muslim] challenge of raising a million volunteers for unconstitutional purposes will kill every chance of a settlement," writes Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, November 24, 1935. In fact it has already done so. In view of the appeal of Amir-i-Shariat, Pir Jamait Ali Shah, Dictator of the Muslims [to "Muslims of the Punjab to spread a network of Majlis Itihad Millat in the province which should enrol volunteers"], subsequent crime resulting in the murder

of S. Bishan Singh and serious injuries to two Sikhs, Sant Singh and Raghbir Singh, and a Hindu, Baldev Raj and other activities of the Muslims, the well-known Akali leader Master Tara Singh has thus given a finishing touch to this question in his statement to the press, dated November 4, 1935, that :—

Sikh leader's final reply

> "Under the circumstances it is cowardly to have any talk with the Muslims. I, therefore, wish to declare that I, at least, shall not participate in any such talk. ... No Sikh leader, no Sikh organization and not even all the Sikh organizations combined have the power to agree to this [the Muslim] demand. Owing to Muslim threats and bullying, the Sikhs consider it an insult to the Panth and the Martyrs to yield an inch even." [The *Tribune*, November 5, 1935.]

This brings the history of the Shahidganj Lahore, including the current relevent events up to the 24th of November 1935. Reference to the criminal cases instituted, during the agitation, by Muslims regarding the alleged demolition of a tomb in the Gurdwara premises and property, and of the so-called mosque—in reality the *Shahidganj Dharamsala*—has been intentionally avoided, as they are still

sub judice.

It is a matter for gratification that the Government has done and is doing its best, in its own way, to create a calm atmosphere and it is hoped that with its continuous efforts the Province, and particularly the city of Lahore, will soon be restored to normal conditions.

APPENDIX

Truth about the Muslim agitation, and about the position and attitude of the Government

The "gory drama being played on the chess-board of Indian politics"—as the Majlis-i-Ahrar calls it—by a certain interested section of the Muslim community of Lahore in the name of the Shahidganj mosque in the Landa Bazaar of the city, is disturbing the peace of the province of the Punjab since July 1935.

The "Gory Drama"

According to a statement of the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam-i-Hind issued on the 23rd July 1935, "some leaders [of this agitation] were given false hopes in connection with the Shahidganj mosque, and on the basis of those false hopes the agitation was started, but it is patent," continues the statement, "that wrong causes only lead to wrong results, ..." and "in our view it would

Starting of agitation

be the height of bravery for the Muslim community to retrace the wrong step." The legal and moral position of the Muslims in respect of the building was extremely weak. In fact, the Muslims had no legal rights at all, and, according to the best Muslim authorities, the whole of the Shahidganj affair was a mere hoax, and the agitation a got-up affair.

Working of unscrupulous people

The Secretary of the Central Muslim Federation, Delhi, writes in his statement to the Press :—

> "In the same way as the Karachi tragedy was the outcome of the instigations of fanatical and self-seeking leaders, while there was no adequate or legitimate provocation for launching such an unconstitutional demonstration, the Lahore tragedy, as it is now revealed, has also been the working of unscrupulous mischief-mongers on the one hand, and short-sighted fanatics on the other. ...
>
> In the case of the Shahidganj mosque dispute, there was not even the slightest provocation for Muslims to outstep the limits of law, as clearly the Sikhs were in possession of the place for 170 years. ...
>
> From the very commencement of troubles in Lahore, false leadership has swayed the de-

cision and action of the Muslim massess with disastrous consequences." [*Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, August 4, 1935.]

While according to Khwaja Ghulam Hussain, Vice Chairman of the Ahrar Tabligh Conference :—

"A mere hoax"

"It has actually been suggested in certain quarters that the Shahidganj mosque affair was a mere hoax. It was adopted only as a cloak to inflame and excite the masses, the underlying object being to deal a crushing blow to the ever-increasing popularity and influence of a particular party. If this is a correct representation of facts, then the whole responsibility of shedding innocent blood and causing untold miseries to poor unsuspecting people and disturbing the peace of Lahore clearly lies on those who started the agitation." [*C. & M. Gazette,* August 18, 1935.]

Mian Anwar-ul-Haq, B.A., of Kapurthala, says :—

"Interested people were responsible for the unfortunate happenings at Lahore in July last, and again interested people are leading the dumb masses on an equally wrong and destructive path." [*C. & M. Gazette*, Sept. 15, 1935.]

In the light of above, it is an open secret that the Shahidganj agitation on the part of the

Muslims is more of a political exploitation of the masses than any religious grievance against the Sikhs or the Government of the Punjab, against which some of the Muslim members of the Punjab Legislative Council have indulged in most extravagant accusations.

Rights of the Sikhs

The so-called mosque, the Shahidganj *Dharamsala* or *Gurdwara* since 1764, as we know, has been in possession of the Sikhs for over one hundred and seventy years—since eighty-five years before the advent of the British rule in the Punjab in 1849, and thirty-seven years before the foundation of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1801. The decisions of the Law Courts from 1850 to 1934 have always been in favour of the Sikhs and the claims of Muslims have been dismissed in all the cases filed by them.

Last Case

"The last case came up for hearing only recently before the Gurdwara Tribunal. The Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam asked for a declaration that the mosque belonged to the Muslims, but Mr. Justice Hilton decided against the Muslims. It was held that the fact that the place had the appearance of a mosque did not entitle the Muslims to its possession. It was conclusively established that the

mosque had never been used for prayers since 1764." [*C. & M. Gazette*, July 2, 1935, p. 7.]

No Appeal

The Anjuman did not even appeal to the High Court from the decision of the Gurdwara Tribunal, and it thus became final.

Not only this. Mr. Muhammad Abdullah of Rawalpindi writes :—

"Muslims have no legal rights"

"In the present struggle over the Shahidganj mosque, so far as I have been able to judge from the observations of many Muslim writers and from the impartial views of others, it is evident that the Muslims do not take their stand on the correct legal grounds. In fact, as a true Muslim, I have no hesitation in confessing that *the Muslims have no legal rights.*" [*C. & M. Gazette*, Sept. 19, 1935.]

Sanctity of Shahidganj for the Sikhs

It will not be out of place to mention here that, in the words of Master Tara Singh, "no special sanctity is attached to this building according to Muslim history and traditions. But according to Sikh history, the site is sacred to the memory of numerous Sikh martyrs. The place is so inseparably bound up with Sikh history that morning and evening all Sikhs, men and women,

when they stand up in prayer before their God, recall to mind and name this place, drawing inspiration from the martyrdom of the saintly Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Sabeg Singh, Bhai Shahbaz Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh, Bhai Haqiqat Rai, Mata Basant Kaur and others who had their bodies cut up limb by limb, had their scalps scraped off, were broken on the wheel, and had their children cut into pieces in their very presence in the dark days of Mir Mannu in this very place." [*C. & M. Gazette*, August 1, 1935.]

Governments effort's at paifying and pleasing the Muslims

But in spite of all this, the irresponsible element of the Muslim community were exploited to urge their claim by a storm of agitation upon this building, even by force and unlawful means, and when their activities actually challenged the law of the land and defied the authority of the executive Government, they had to be suppressed with the help of armed troops, who had to resort to firing on ten occasions. The Government did and is doing its best, in its own way, to bring round the Muslim agitators to a sensible frame of mind. Rather, in the words of Sardar Sahib Sardar Ujjal Singh, M.A., M.L.C., in the Punjab Legislative Council on November 14, "the Government has been over-anxious to placate the Muslims."

"The Government did their best not to lose the sympathy of the Muslim community. They tried to explore all avenues to help the Muslims, but the law did not come to their rescue. In fact, they allowed unlawful demonstrations too long, and when the Muslim mob was engaged in unlawful activities the Government, as a mark of appreciation of the restriant of that mob, gave them that most valuable property (the Shah Chiragh mosque) as a gift."

"The charge was laid [by the Muslim members] against the Government for not explaining their position to the public. As a matter of fact," thought Sardar Sahib Ujjal Singh, "Government had given too many explanations and too many communiques had been issued by the Government."

"Too many explanations"

As to the attitude of the Muslims, he said, "the Muslim mob tried to intimidate the Sikh Community. When they faild in this, they tried to intimidate the Government, possibly with some success, and encouraged by it, their agitation went on increasing."

Regarding the firing on 20th and 21st July 1935, the same gentleman opined that "that was the first instance of an incident of that magnitude when firing was used to the minimum possible extent." This view of Sardar Sahib Ujjal Singh was endorsed by

"Firing used to minimum possible extent"

the Hon'ble Mr. D. J. Boyd, Finance Member to the Government of the Punjab, on the floor of the Council Chamber on November 15. He said, "The firing had been fully controlled. Although firing had to be resorted to on ten occasions, not more than 23 rounds were fired in all. Never before in the history of quelling disturbances could such restraint have been exercised." [*The Civil & Military Gazette*, November 17, 1935, and The *Tribune*, Lahore, November 15 and I6, 1935.]

Only 23 rounds fired in all on ten occasions

But in spite of all this the Muslim members of the Council were out to level against the Government most unwarranted and baseless accusations full of "suppositions," "mis-statements," "misrepresentations" and "total untruths" to such an extent that, on one occasion, the Hon'ble Mr. D. J. Boyd was constrained to declare, that "that is an absolute lie. I think it a shame that any member of this House should utter a lie of this kind without verifying facts," and again, "I wish to say that the statement of the Hon'ble member is totally untrue." On another occasion the Hon'ble Finance Member "expected that the member who had made that allegation against the Government would rise up to apologise for the foul calumny whic he had uttered." "Instead of that he

Muslim Accusations against Government

sat absolutely silent and still, having thrown mud at the Government." [The *Tribune*, Lahore, November 12 and 16, 1935.]

And, when "the President ruled that phrases ["foul calummy", etc.,] were unparliamentary, and requested Mr. Boyd to withdraw them, Mr. Boyd bowed to the ruling of the chair, *but submitted that it was unfair for him to have to withdraw the description of remarks which were proved to be untrue, but which the opposition members* [who had indulged in extravagant accusations against the Government and had "thrown mud at the Government"] *had not withdrawn.*"

Similarly the Hon'ble Mr. F. H. Puckle, Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, "deplored the succession of untruth' that had been bandied about the province in regard to the part played by the Government and Military in this affair." *Civil and Military Gazette*, November 12, 1935.]

Protesting against the Muslim members' accusations against the Government on the floor of the Council House, the Finance Member to the Punjab Government explained on the 11th November, 1935, that "the Government's position was that the Sikhs were in legal possession of the building and that it was impossible for the Government

to prevent them from doing whatever they liked with it. ... "

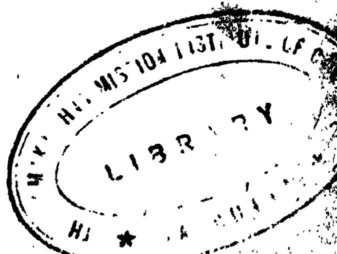
Besides the explanations offered by the Government in the various communiques issued by the Director of Information Bureau, Punjab Government, the position of the Government in this case has been clearly explained by the *Civil & Military Gazette*, as quoted below, in its editorial of November 13, 1935, while commenting upon the unwarranted accusations levelled against the Government by a Muslim member of the Punjab Legislative Council on November 11, 1935 :—

"In the discussion in the Legislative Council, on Monday, relating to events connected with the demolition of the mosque in the Shahidganj Gurdwara, such prominence was given to rumours which formed the basis of the accusations levelled against the Government that the facts of the situation were completely clouded, and even when the Finance Member asked a Muslim member to formulate what the latter called the minimum demands of Muslims, one of these demands betrayed an inability to grasp what is after all the most basic fact in the dispute between Muslims and Sikhs. According to the Muslim spokesman in the Council, Mus-

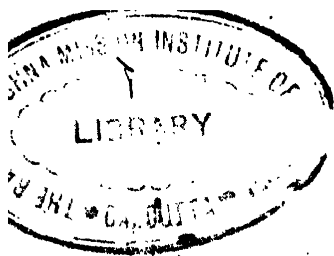
lims demand "the restoration of our rights to the Shahidganj mosque." The question of the rights of Muslims to the mosque is the crux of the problem, and what the cloud of rumours has done is to hide from the Muslim gaze the fact of all facts that if Muslims believe in their right to the mosque, so do the Sikhs, and in this clash of rights, it is not the function of the Government to determine the justice or injustice of the claims of the two communities against each other outside the orbit of the courts of law, more specially when these claims have formed the subject-matter of litigation. ... With the decision of the courts before it in the Shahidganj case and with no legal protest by Muslims against the decision, the Government could not over-ride the findings of the courts without seriously jeopardising the entire law in regard to rights of ownership. The Government is bound to accept the findings of courts of law in questions affecting property as final, unless there is an appeal against these findings, and even then, the Government cannot go beyond the decision of the court of appeal. As a matter of fact, it is a primary function of any Government, in its

executive capacity, to see that such final decisions of courts of law are enforced without a disturbance of the peace.

The Government of the Punjab today is not an autocratic government and is incapable of upholding any rights which a court of law has refused to uphold after due trial. With the decree of its courts of law in the Shahidganj case before it, giving to the Sikhs the right of ownership in the mosque, the Government could not legally 'restore' any rights to Muslims in the mosque which Muslims failed to establish in a court of law. *By asking the Government to deprive the Sikhs of rights, which they have established in a court of law, Muslims are asking the Government to commit an illegal act.*"



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